

AN EMPLOYMENT MODEL FOR CONTEXTUALIZING VOCATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

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BY  
JAMES BRUYN  
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To my loving spouse, Susan.

Thank you!

Tourists; that's what we are becoming . . .  
Tourists, we move through life, flitting from idea to idea, from  
novelty to novelty, from new person to new person,  
Never settling, always moving . . .  
Selecting the best sights, the highlights, the choice cuts,  
avoiding the mess on the edge of town, the slums, all the  
uncomfortable things, the struggle of really knowing people,  
Never settling, always moving lest we hear the hollow clang of our own emptiness . . .  
Tourists; that's what we are becoming . . .  
Inquisitive, curious, picking up the tidbits of other people's depth . . .  
Tourists, flicking through our snapshots, the paper thin  
trophies of our click and run existence, filing them away, loading the next roll of film,  
Never settling, always moving,  
Tourists; that's what we are becoming,  
Tourists; that's what we are becoming

—Mark Greene, *Tourists*

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis-project is to develop a model describing employment contexts to assist disciple makers in contextualizing their ministries so that the gospel can be more effectively infused into the beauty and brokenness of the workplace. This study combines two dimensions—skill utilization and workplace health—into a single model. Using quantitative and qualitative data, the feelings and perceptions of employees are categorized into four employment contexts. From the Bible, this study demonstrates the efficacy of faith in all employment contexts. The significance of this study is that it provides an evidenced-based approach for contextualizing vocational discipleship.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Back Story**

Solomon personifies wisdom as calling aloud; as raising her voice in the public square; making her speeches at the city gate (Proverbs 1:20–21; Proverbs 8:1–3). What does wisdom see as she stands in the public square and at the city gate where business occurs?

John, while on the island of Patmos, is blessed to have his eyes opened to see “someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire” (Revelation 1:13–14). What do these eyes like blazing fire see as Jesus stands beside each employee in their workplace?

When God peers behind the masks of Christian employees in the workplace and searches their hearts, what does he see? Does he see how the alignment, or lack of alignment, between their jobs and their skills, strengths, and passions impact them? Does he see how their work environments are impacting their psyches?

#### **Objective**

The objective of this thesis-project is to develop an employment model that illustrates the concerns and experiences of employees in the twenty-first century for vocational disciple

makers, thus giving them a better understanding of workplace cultures into which they are contextualizing the gospel.<sup>1</sup>

For the purposes of this thesis-project, the term *vocational disciple maker* includes pastors and those involved in one-on-one or small group settings ministering to people in the marketplace.

An understanding of the cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions of different workplace cultures should help vocational disciple makers be more effective at building bridges between the workplace and the Bible. Without this, there is a risk that biblical meanings will often be forced to fit local cultural categories, thus distorting the message of the gospel.<sup>2</sup>

This thesis-project is offered with the hope that readers might explore tailoring their programs for vocational discipleship based on the proposed employment model.

As the *Willowbank Report: Consultation on Gospel and Culture* published by Lausanne highlights, “The process of communicating the gospel cannot be isolated from the human culture from which it comes, or from that in which it is to be proclaimed.”<sup>3</sup> The *Willowbank Report* reminds us that we must positively affirm human cultural achievement, which includes organizational cultures, because the organizational culture is the context where employees express the creativity of our Creator.<sup>4</sup>

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1. This employment model could also be used in other contexts: e.g., by those providing training in employee resiliency.

2. Paul G. Hiebert, “Critical Contextualization,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11, no. 3 (July 1987): 104.

3. *Lausanne Occasional Paper 2—The Willowbank Report: Consultation on Gospel and Culture (LOP 2)*, accessed March 11, 2020, <https://www.lausanne.org/content/lop/lop-2>, 3.

4. *Willowbank Report*, 4.

The context for this thesis-project primarily describes the concerns of employees. *Black's Law Dictionary* defines *employee* as “a person in the service of another under any contract of hire, express or implied, oral or written, where the employer has the power or right to control and direct the employee in the material details of how the work is to be performed.”<sup>5</sup> Employees represent 85 percent of the workforce in Canada and 90 percent of the workforce in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

### Research Questions

This thesis-project has been developed to research the following questions

1. Can an employment model be developed that describes how employees experience different employment contexts as well as their associated feelings and attitudes?
2. If an employment model can be used to describe different work contexts, how useful is this employment model to enable vocational disciple makers to contextualize their ministry?

My hypothesis is that people's feelings and attitudes towards their work employment are shaped both by their work environment and by the alignment of their job to their skills, strengths, and passions. To that end the employment model proposed in this thesis-project incorporates both of these variables.

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5. Henry Campbell Black, *Black's Law Dictionary* (St. Paul, MN; West Publishing Co, 1991).

6. Statistics Canada, *Employment by Class of Worker, annual, 2019*, accessed December 19, 2019, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=1410002701>; “Three-in-Ten U.S. Jobs Are Held by the Self-Employed and the Workers They Hire.” *Pew Research Center*, August 28, 2019, [https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/29/facts-about-american-workers/st\\_2015-10-22\\_self-employed-01-2/](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/29/facts-about-american-workers/st_2015-10-22_self-employed-01-2/).

## **My Experience**

In my role as Director of Faith At Work Network in Calgary, Alberta, I have the privilege of being a catalyst to facilitate workplace faith communities. In these faith communities, people share stories about the ecstasies and agonies of work and ask how the Bible relates to their context.

Mary was a single mom in her late fifties who, upon returning to work after taking sick leave, discovered a younger person had taken over her job.<sup>7</sup> She was sidelined into a job that did not utilize her skills or interest her. While she received the same pay, on a good day, she would describe her work as boring. Mary wondered how her relationship with God would provide her the resilience for this season of her life.

Tom, a young man in his early twenties and raised without a father, was given an opportunity to purchase shares in the very profitable small technology company he thoroughly enjoyed working for. As a Christ follower, Tom wondered whether he should invest in a highly successful business venture led by non-believers.

Julie worked for a Christian organization in which she was bullied and abused. After several years of this, she became mentally and emotionally scarred and was fired. Julie wondered where Christ was in her pain.

Roy had trained as a specialist in his industry in which there are only two such companies in Canada, one in Calgary and the other, three thousand kilometers away. After a shake-up of the executives at his employer, many employees became independently wealthy through stock

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7. These are based on true stories from interviews; however, the names have been changed to protect privacy.

options, but the corporate culture became increasingly toxic. Roy wondered how his faith would sustain him in this environment.

Leading this ministry, I realized that an employment model that describes the effect of job fit and the work environment might help vocational disciple makers contextualize discipleship to the various issues of the workplace.

### **An Employment Model to Describe Work Environments**

Who are these people who come to our churches Sunday after Sunday, who volunteer in Sunday school, who lead small groups, who serve on our church boards, and whom we rely on for their generous giving? We count on them for their leadership, chairing committee meetings, and leading Bible studies. Yet are we aware of the struggles they face every day in their workplaces, which might either draw them closer to God or lure them away from God?

I suggest that any effort to make the gospel truly contextual, truly relevant in the workplace, should be aware of the agonies and ecstasies that people face daily in their workplaces.

From my observations, employees primarily experience the highs and lows of work in two dimensions. The first dimension is the alignment of an employee's skills, strength, and passions to their jobs. Skills are "an identifiable, repeatable behavior sequence emitted in response to a demand or task".<sup>8</sup> While interests move beyond aptitude to motivation.<sup>9</sup> Strengths

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8. René V. Dawis, "Vocational Psychology, Vocational Adjustment, and the Workforce: Some Familiar and Unanticipated Consequences," *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* 2, no. 2 (06, 1996): 229–48, <http://dtl.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.dtl.idm.oclc.org/docview/614325679?accountid=10143>.

9. Dawis, "Vocational Psychology", 236.

describe what a person does best.<sup>10</sup> According to a Gallup survey of ten million employees worldwide, only one-third “strongly agree” with the statement “At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.”<sup>11</sup> In other words, most people do not have the opportunity in their workplaces to focus on what they do best.<sup>12</sup>

The second dimension is the environment where a person works. PwC defines a work environment as “the environment at work that gives people their sense of purpose, including the way offices are organised, the arrangements for working hours, the commitment by leadership to a mission, and the training and support offered by human resources.”<sup>13</sup> Work environments can range from healthy to toxic. A healthy work environment is a workplace where people feel respected, supported, engaged, energized, and inspired. In healthy work environments, timely and constructive feedback is provided. In a healthy work environment, “People smile, make jokes, talk openly, and help one another.”<sup>14</sup> A toxic work environment is a workplace where people feel abused or bullied. Toxic work environments are workplaces where people take credit for the work somebody else does. Toxic work environments are places where people are always looking over their shoulders or are micromanaged. People who work in a toxic environment are afraid of how their leaders will react to them and often feel marginalized. A toxic “work environment causes people to have physiological responses as if they are in a fight-or-flight

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10. Tom Rath, *Strength Finders 2.0* (New York, Gallup Press, 2015), loc. 101 of 2083, Kindle.

11. Rath, *Strength Finders*, loc. 101, Kindle.

12. Rath, *Strength Finders*, loc. 211, Kindle.

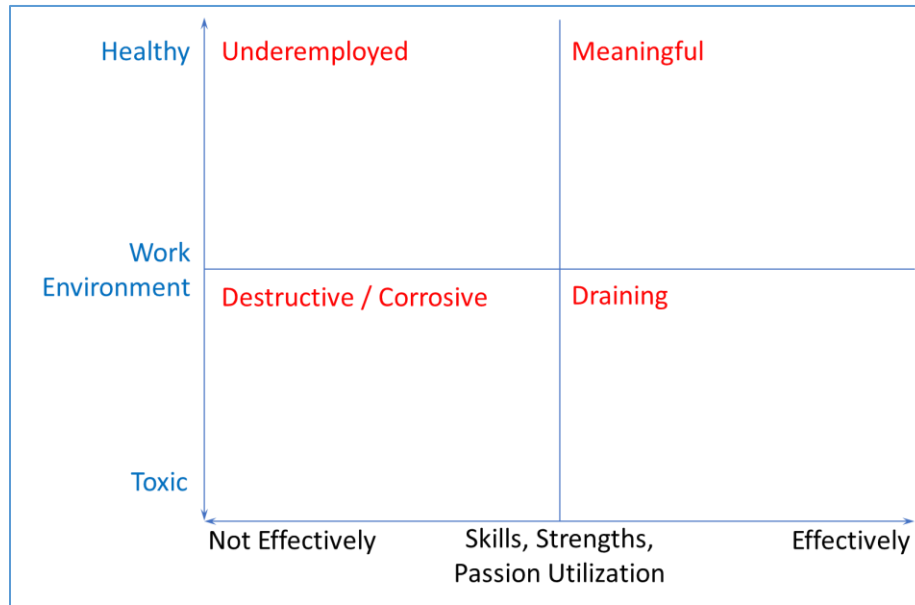
13. Carol Stubbings, et al. *Preparing for tomorrow's workforce, today*. PWC, 2018.  
<https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/people-organisation/pdf/pwc-preparing-for-tomorrows-workforce-today.pdf>.

14. Gary Chapman, *Rising Above a Toxic Workplace* (Chicago: Moody Publishers), 17.



situation,”<sup>15</sup> “When a workplace becomes toxic, its poison spreads beyond its walls and into the lives of its workers and their families.”<sup>16</sup>

These two dimensions can be modeled as shown in figure 1. Skills, strengths, and passion utilization are plotted on the x-axis, and work environment is plotted on the y-axis.



**Figure 1. An employment model.** Two dimensions that describe how people might perceive their employment contexts are their work environment and the alignment of their jobs to their skills, strengths, and passions.

A person in the top right quadrant is working in a job that is aligned to his skills and talents (talent zone) in a healthy work environment. An example of this might be someone who

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15. Chapman, *Rising Above a Toxic Workplace*, 17.

16. Studs Terkel describes work this way: “Work, is, by its very nature, about violence—to the spirit as well as to the body. It is about ulcers as well as accidents, about shouting matches as well as fistfights, about nervous breakdowns. . . . It is, above all (or beneath all), about daily humiliations. To survive the day is triumph enough for the walking wounded among the great many of us. The scars, psychic as well as physical, brought home to the supper and the TV set, may have touched, malignantly, the soul of our society. More or less.” Studs Terkel, *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), xi.

enjoys working with numbers, who is an accountant working for an organization that fosters employee participation and inclusion, encourages autonomy and active engagement, provides resources and information, and serves a greater purpose.<sup>17</sup> This was Tom's story.

Sitting next to this accountant in the same organization might be someone who finds herself in the top left quadrant. This person is not working in her talent zone but experiences the same healthy work environment. An example of this would be an award-winning, master pastry chef who is working as a barista at a coffee shop. This became Mary's story when she returned to work after her illness.

A person in the bottom right quadrant is working in a job that is aligned to his skills and talents but is in a toxic work environment. An example of this might be an engineer working in an environment driven by corporate profits that is crushing the life out of its employees. This could be an environment where employees are expected to work extreme hours while their manager daily criticizes them. This was Roy's story after the leadership shake-up at his organization.

A person working in the bottom left quadrant is working in a toxic work environment and in a job that is not aligned to her skills, interests, or passions. An example might be an immigrant with a master's degree in economics from her home country who is working as a laborer in a manufacturing plant where employees are constantly emotionally abused. This was Julie's story.

External circumstances might move people from the quadrant they are in too a different quadrant. For example, companies may change ownership, new people may be appointed to leadership roles in the organization, corporate values may change, or jobs may be outsourced

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17. Lindsay McMillan, "A Future That Works: Workplace Wellbeing" (Australia, Reventure, 2017), 35.

overseas. In September 2014, oil was around \$95 per barrel. Four months later, it had dropped to about \$50 per barrel and continued to hover between \$50 and \$60 per barrel until 2020, when oil prices dropped even further to \$20 per barrel before rebounding to \$40 per barrel. This dramatic drop in oil prices caused job losses across all industries in Alberta while significantly increasing stress levels and tensions in the workplace for the remaining employees in the oil and gas sector.

In 2013, Canadian Pacific Railway's (CP) share price was approximately CAD\$50. An activist investor saw the potential for significant financial gain and forced a change of the CEO and executive leadership team. This strategy made many employees and investors independently wealthy as CP's share price rose to over CAD\$300. While the new CEO made excellent business decisions, many employees found that their work had shifted from the top right quadrant to the bottom left or bottom right quadrant. Some employees left the organization as they could not tolerate the environment. Many remained, either because they were close to retirement, or because the nearest similar job was thirty-six hundred kilometers away or in another country.

### **Is There a Preferred Quadrant?**

Gallup's research suggests that when people are working in their strengths zone, or the upper right quadrant of this employment model, they have more confidence, direction, and hope, and they are better able to express kindness toward others. Gallup's research also illustrates serious implications on people's health and relationships when they are not working in their strengths zones.<sup>18</sup> Vocational assessments like the Holland Occupational Themes (RIASEC) have been developed to help employees identify occupations that would enable them to self-

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18. Rath, *Strength Finders*, loc. 225–27.

identify as working in jobs in the upper or lower right quadrants of this employment model.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, McKinsey suggests that doing what one loves is one of seven essential elements in being mindful of a person's career path and achieving success.<sup>20</sup>

A Christian worldview certainly embraces the research of McKinsey, Gallup, and the field of vocational psychology, which demonstrate the value of working in the upper right quadrant for both the employee and the employer. I intend to demonstrate in this thesis-project additional perspectives from a Christian worldview that the vocational disciple maker could consider.

### **Importance of Contextualization for Vocational Discipleship**

I developed this employment model as one way of describing the contexts of the twenty-first-century workplace. Peter Schineller, in his book *Handbook on Inculturation*, suggests that Christians have an obligation to continually search for ways in which the good news can be more deeply lived, celebrated, and shared.<sup>21</sup> When Christians live, celebrate, and share the gospel within their workplaces, they can become catalysts for change, fueled by a vision that moves them forward in God's great story of redemption and reconciliation.

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19. The Holland Occupational Themes is a theory of personality that focuses on career and vocational choice. Holland's theory asserts that people seek work environments that allow them to express their constellation of six personality types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. The six personality/work environment types were hypothesized to form the points on an equilateral hexagon (in the order RIASEC), with the distance between points indicating the similarity or dissimilarity between types. The typology has come to dominate the field of career counseling and has been incorporated into most of the popular assessments used in the field. Bruce Walsh, *Handbook of Vocational Psychology: Theory, Research, and Practice* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 59.

20. Jacqueline Brassey, Nick van Dam, and Katie Coates, "Seven Essential Habits of a lifelong-learning mind-set," McKinsey & Company, February 19, 2019, <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/seven-essential-elements-of-a-lifelong-learning-mind-set>.

21. Peter Schineller, *Handbook on Inculturation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 3.

Workplaces of the twenty-first century are new cultures for the gospel to penetrate. As David Bosch, in his book *Transforming Mission*, states, “If we take the incarnation seriously, the Word has to become flesh in every new context.”<sup>22</sup> Therefore, I would suggest that vocational disciple makers are obligated to understand the anthropological concerns of the workplace so that the Word can become flesh in the workplace. This is the process of contextualization. “Contextualization captures in method and perspective the challenge of relating the gospel to cultures,” including twenty-first-century workplaces.<sup>23</sup>

Addressing the subject of contextualization, Ed Stetzer reminds us that contextualization does not seek to remove new Christians from their workplace—as in ‘One more Christian, one less Employee.’ Instead, it seeks to interact with individuals in relation to their workplaces because workplaces are not inherently evil; rather, they are a human construct of inherited values and personal decisions (e.g., cultural rituals, social traditions). These subjective tangibles are so ingrained that many do not even realize the workplace’s influence.<sup>24</sup>

Contextualizing Christianity in the workplace creates the opportunity for Christianity to connect with the social structures of the workplace, as well as address the critical questions arising from the politics, ethics, and economics of the workplace. The objective of contextualizing the gospel to the workplace is to enable Christian employees to say, “Now I can practice the virtues of Christianity, affirm my workplace, and follow Jesus.” This is

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22. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Twentieth anniversary edition, American Society of Missiology Series (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2011), 153.

23. Darrell L. Whiteman, “Contextualization: The Theory, the Gap, the Challenge,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21, no. 1 (January 1, 1997), 2; <https://doi.org/10.1177/239693939702100101>.

24. Paul Hiebert, “The Gospel in Human Contexts: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization,” in *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, ed. David Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 157.

accomplished when Christianity is taught in such a way that it meets people's deepest needs and penetrates their worldviews.<sup>25</sup> By having a better understanding of the anthropological concerns of the twenty-first-century workplace, a disciple maker is better equipped to help Christians in the workplace grow spiritually by helping them apply scriptural teachings to these concerns.<sup>26</sup>

We can contextualize the gospel for the twenty-first-century workplace with confidence, for we know, as Darrel Whiteman in his work on contextualization points out, that “the practice and understanding of Christianity continuously bursts free from the chains of bondage to cultural tradition.”<sup>27</sup>

The risk of not contextualizing Christianity is that the gospel may not engage individuals in the workplace at the level of their deepest needs and aspirations.<sup>28</sup> Effective disciple making helps workers see that their homes are found neither in the subculture of their local churches nor in the subculture of their workplaces but in God's kingdom.

Contextualized practices in the workplace, like contextualized theologies, must be biblically-based and recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of all believers open to God's leading.<sup>29</sup> “That task requires being humbly certain of our beliefs and methods, rather than arrogantly being so sure that we know what God would do and have us say in any situation.”<sup>30</sup>

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25. Whiteman, “Contextualization,” 2.

26. Hiebert, “Critical Contextualization,” 110.

27. Whiteman, “Contextualization,” 4.

28. Whiteman, “Contextualization,” 5.

29. Hiebert, “Critical Contextualization,” 110.

30. Ed Stetzer, “Response to Paul G. Hiebert ‘The Gospel in Human Contexts’” in *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, ed. David Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 158.

To address this concern, Paul Hiebert, in “The Gospel in Human Context,” suggests three principles of contextualization we need to keep in mind.<sup>31</sup> “A full view of the gospel in human contexts must first emphasize that the gospel is indeed divine revelation to humans, not human searches for the truth. This revelation is given in the particularities of history and locality, but it is given by God and reveals God’s universal message to all mankind.”<sup>32</sup> In other words, the gospel is divine revelation to people in the workplace, given by God, and reveals God’s universal message to people in the workplace. Secondly, “The gospel must be put in specific, socio-cultural contexts for people to understand it. To do so we must study Scripture and humans and build a bridge between them.”<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, for people in the workplace to understand God’s message, it must be contextualized to the specific, socio-cultural context of the workplace, and vocational disciple makers need to build bridges between Scripture and the workplace. Thirdly, “The gospel is transformative. It is not simply a message to be affirmed as true, but a call to follow Christ throughout life in radical discipleship.”<sup>34</sup> Herein lies the challenge for the vocational disciple maker. What does it mean for God to move people from affirming that the gospel is true in the context of their workplaces to a life of radical discipleship in the workplace?

While this paper proposes that vocational discipleship needs to be contextualized, “the essential meaning of the biblical message must at all costs be retained.”<sup>35</sup> “While seeking to communicate the gospel with care, faithfulness and zeal, we leave the results to God in

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31. Hiebert, “The Gospel in Human Contexts,” Chapter 8 of *MissionShift*.

32. Hiebert, “The Gospel in Human Contexts,” Chapter 8 of *MissionShift*.

33. Hiebert, “The Gospel in Human Contexts,” Chapter 8 of *MissionShift*.

34. Hiebert, “The Gospel in Human Contexts,” Chapter 8 of *MissionShift*.

35. *The Willowbank Report*, 8.

humility.”<sup>36</sup> This means that in the process of contextualizing the gospel in the workplace, there needs to be a desire to see “the meekness and gentleness of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:1)”<sup>37</sup> in both the employee and especially in ourselves

*The Willowbank Report* proposes five aspects of Christian humility in a missionary situation that are equally applicable to contextualizing the gospel in the workplace.

1. Humility acknowledges the problem workplace cultures present and does not try to avoid or oversimplify it.

2. Humility takes the trouble to understand and appreciate the culture of the workplace.

*The Willowbank Report* suggests that we need to repent of the ignorance that assumes we have all the answers and that our only role is to teach; and that we need to repent of judgmental attitudes.

3. Humility requires that we begin our communication where people actually are and not where we would like them to be.

4. Humility recognizes that even the most gifted, dedicated, and experienced vocational disciple maker can seldom communicate the gospel in the workplace culture as effectively as trained Christian employees.

5. Humility trusts in the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is always the chief communicator, who alone opens the eyes of the blind and brings people to a new birth.<sup>38</sup>

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36. *The Willowbank Report*, 19.

37. *The Willowbank Report*, 20.

38. *The Willowbank Report*, 20–22.



Effectively contextualizing the gospel for the workplace is a win-win scenario for the Western church. Firstly, the vocational disciple maker will have the privilege of seeing people follow Christ through a life of radical discipleship in their organizations. Secondly, vocational disciple makers themselves will be changed when they see God at work in the lives of Christians in a different context from their own.<sup>39</sup> Thirdly, as Plake suggests, when the gospel becomes understandable and meaningful within new socio-cultural settings (such as the workplace), the church grows in its understanding and application of the gospel, and the kingdom of God is expanded to include many who could not embrace a foreign gospel.<sup>40</sup> Fourthly, when going down the route of contextualization, it is possible that new churches or faith communities will be formed that may not necessarily resemble the kinds of churches we attend today in the West.<sup>41</sup>

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39. Whiteman, "Contextualization," 6.

40. John Farquhar Plake, "Contextualization and Methodology: The Praxis of Gospel Communication," n.d., ii.

41. Whiteman, "Contextualization," 5.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON EMPLOYMENT CONTEXTS

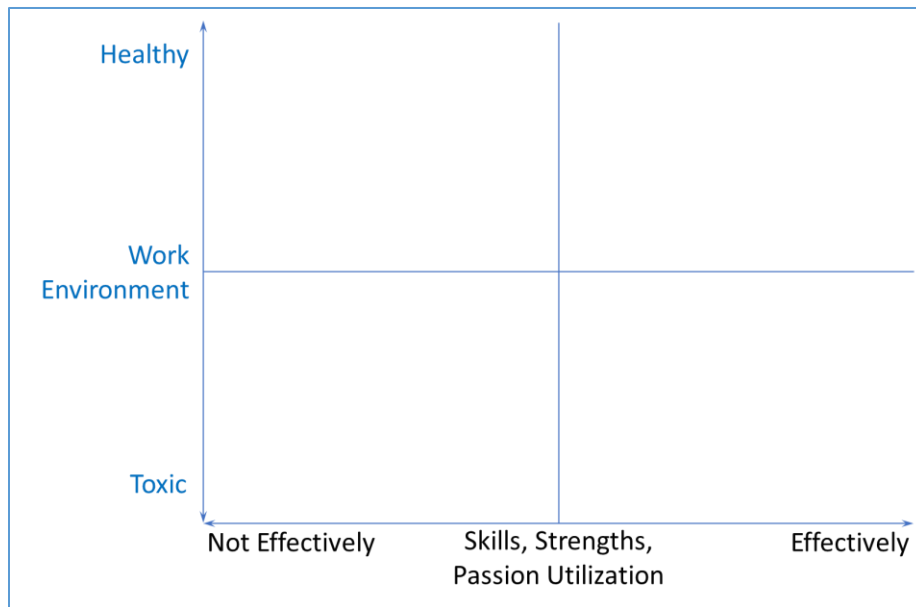
In this chapter I will explore how the Bible relates to the vertical and horizontal dimensions of this employment model (work environments and work alignment to skills, strengths, and passions). This chapter will also discuss stories from the Old Testament of men and women who have worked in each quadrant of this employment model.

I suggest that each person's employment context, no matter how idyllic or dark

- (a) occurs amongst relationships with leaders, colleagues, and customers,
- (b) occurs in a place,
- (c) consists of multiple tasks, and
- (d) has constraints within which the work must be performed.

These are gifts from God, who promises to abundantly provide the wisdom each person needs to be wisely steward of these gifts.

The vertical dimension of this employment model represents work environments and describes the relationships, places, and values that determine if a work environment is healthy or toxic. The horizontal dimension of this employment model represents job fit and describes how effectively people's skills, strengths, and passions are used in their jobs (figure 2).



**Figure 2. The context of the workplace.** The vertical dimension of this employment model describes the environmental constraints of the workplace while the horizontal dimension describes the constraints imposed by the tasks of a person’s job.

### **Vertical Dimension—Relationships Place**

#### **Relationships Impact Employment contexts**

*Disciples live out the fruit of the Spirit in the relationships they form at work.*  
—James Bruyn

Humankind, created in God’s image, was created for relationship with God. We find in Scripture that the Lord is not only our Creator but also our Redeemer, our Shepherd, and our King. Before any Christians are employees, they are first their heavenly Father’s sons or daughters and servants (Romans 8:14–17).

Created in God’s image, humankind was also created to be in relationship with one another. After God had created Adam, nothing in God’s creation was sufficient to help Adam honor his vocation or enjoy the beauty of God’s creation within the constraints God established for his well-being. Satisfying Adam’s need for human relationship required a fresh creative act

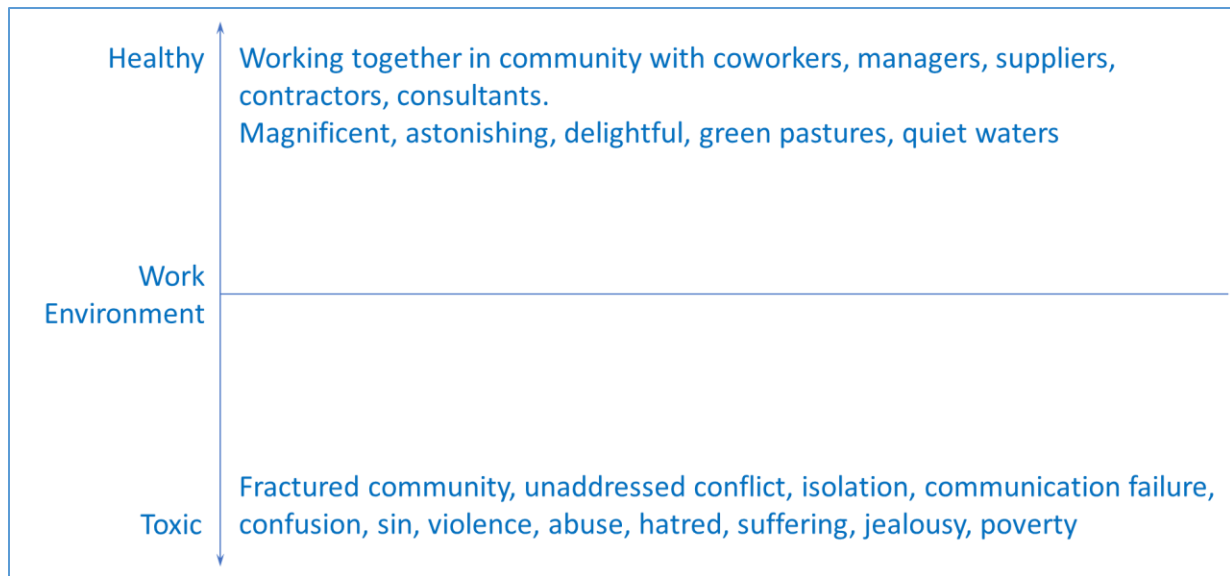
of God. So God created from Adam's flesh a beautiful, perfect helper, Eve. Together, Adam and Eve in an intimate relationship with God, worked for a season in an idyllic environment. This environment could be described as working at the top, or over the top, of this employment model.

Today it is through working with coworkers, managers, suppliers, contractors, and consultants in God's breathtaking world that people enjoy all of God's amazing provisions (Genesis 2:16). This is a picture of work happening in the upper half of this employment model.

Yet, as a result of the fall, workplace relationships are marred by conflict, isolation, and communication breakdowns. The story of the tower of Babel depicts the fracture of community, the breakdown of fellowship, the failure in communication, and the growth in isolation and confusion that people experience today in many employment contexts.<sup>1</sup> At their extreme, the impact of fractured relationships describes work environments in the lower half of this employment model (figure 3).

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1. David Atkinson. *The Message of Genesis 1-11*. Bible Speaks Today Series (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, Olive Tree Edition).



**Figure 3. The relational dimension of work environments.** God created people to work together in community. By God’s grace, many people still experience that today. As a result of the fall, some work environments are not quite like this.

Christians are not meant to be doormats or entrapped by the spiritual powers of the workplace that manifest themselves in the way people relate to one another. God sends Christians into the world to gracefully receive with gratitude the difficult person, the lack of funds, and all the frustrations of completing a project. Often this is a spiritual battle. A battle for which Christ has equipped Christians with spiritual armor (Ephesians 6:10–20). A battle in which Christians see the power of God released in their lives and the resurrection life pouring in. A battle that is faced successfully only when Christians surrender their wills, their hopes, and their dreams into the hands of their Shepherd.

## **The Place Where Work Occurs Impacts Employment contexts**

*Disciples are formed in God's pasture—the workplace.*  
—James Bruyn

As the sheep of God's pasture (Psalm 100) our work occurs in God's pasture. Sometimes employment contexts reflect the beauty of God's creation and are marked by green pastures and quiet waters. Other times God's pasture is a workplace rife with sin, violence, poverty, or abuse.

For Corrie ten Boom, God's pasture for several years was a German concentration camp. Surrounded by disease, cockroaches, lice, death, hatred, untold misery, and seemingly pointless suffering, life took on two mutually impossible, separate levels at Ravensbruck, the notorious women's extermination camp. On one level, the observable external life grew more horrible every day. On the other level, the life she lived with God, grew daily better, truth upon truth, glory upon glory.<sup>2</sup>

When people see their work occurring in God's pasture in the presence of their Good Shepherd, they have the privilege of asking God to open their eyes to see his goodness in their workplace! John Stott points out that because Jesus is Lord, no one has the right to pick and choose the employment contexts in which they will submit to God's authority.<sup>3</sup> When people believe that they are the sheep of God's pasture, instead of focusing on their work situation or achievements, they can then offer the glory and fallenness of their work and workplace into the hands of their Shepherd. When people offer their work into God's hands, God transforms their work into a blessing for themselves, their workplace and society.

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2. Corrie ten Boom, Elizabeth Sherrill, and John Sherrill, *The Hiding Place* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books), ProQuest Ebook Central, 2006, 149.

3. John Stott, *The Radical Disciple: Some Neglected Aspects of Our Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press), loc. 70 of 1271. Kindle.

## **Horizontal Dimension—Job Fit**

### **Tasks Impact Employment contexts**

*The vocational disciple maker has an immense privilege to observe the vast diversity of the wonders of God's creation through the eyes of the workers they are discipling.*  
—James Bruyn

God delegated to humankind the role of vice-regent to rule over the magnificent, astonishing, delightful place he created (Genesis 2:15). Naming God's creation (Genesis 2:19) while exploring, understanding, and subduing the place where they work are responsibilities God blessed his vice-regents with. The privilege to create and to bring order out of chaos are further blessings of God. This is the picture of work that is done in alignment with a person's skills, strengths, and passions, or on the right side of this employment model.

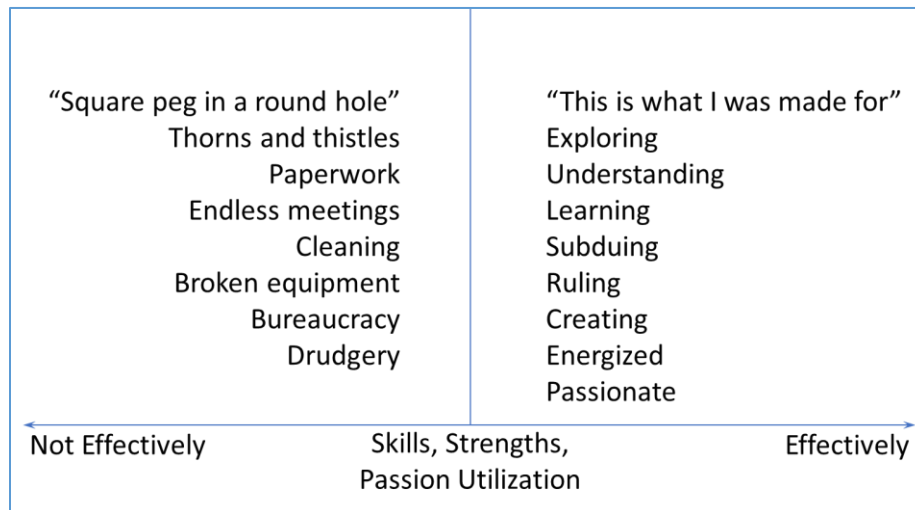
Reading Genesis 3:17–19, we discover that this is not the way work is anymore. This passage tells us that the ground is cursed, and that people will eat the food God blesses them with through painful toil all the days of their lives. Timothy Keller describes work lying with all other aspects of human life under the curse of sin.<sup>4</sup> Keller goes on to say that all work will be marked by frustration and a lack of fulfillment.<sup>5</sup> We are told that people will find thorns and thistles in the fields where their plants grow. Furthermore, the food they eat will come by the sweat of their brows. At one level, these verses can be taken literally to refer to the agriculture industry. However, this is too narrow an interpretation of these verses, as God's provision for our lives

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4. Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2014), 89.

5. Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 89.

today is delivered through a complex, highly interdependent supply chain. In fact, all work is plagued by thorns and thistles, which can range from paperwork, endless meetings, cleaning, and broken equipment to bureaucratic systems that seem to hinder accomplishing the primary tasks of a persons' job. These are employment contexts along the left side of this employment model (figure 4).



**Figure 4. The skill alignment dimension of this employment model.** By God's grace, many people's work experience involves tasks that they enjoy. Yet, because of the fall, work includes tasks that are not aligned with a person's skills, strengths, or passions, and for some people, this is the majority of their work experience.

When people come to know Christ as their Lord and Savior, they are called to lay down on the altar of sacrifice their possessions as well as their skills, strengths, and passions, acknowledging that he is Lord over their lives, their possessions, and the technologies and tools they use in their work. When people lay these down, when their hands are empty, then God comes and pours his life into them. When people live this way, they will see God transform their lives and fill their hearts with thanksgiving regardless of where they perceive their jobs on the horizontal axis of this employment model.

When people place their faith in God, they become sons and daughters of God. As God's children, Christ's love compels them to care for God's creation. As people grasp the length,



breadth, height, and depth of God's love for them, and as they grasp what it means to be God's child, people's focus shift from whether their work effectively utilizes their skills, strengths, and passions to how best they can express their love for God through their work.

### **Constraints Impact Employment contexts**

God constrained each element of creation to perform the functions they were created for (Genesis 1:1–25). Similarly, God established constraints for Adam and Eve, including taking one day of rest every seven days and not eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2:17). As Brueggemann points out, God does not explain this tree. All that counts is the prohibition, the authority of the one who speaks, and the unqualified expectation of obedience.<sup>6</sup> Unlike the rest of creation, God did not enforce these constraints because humankind is created in his image.

In the same way today, every job comes with constraints on the vertical dimension of this employment model, including leadership, legislation, and expectations of customers, shareholders, and society. There are also constraints in every job imposed on the horizontal dimension of this employment model, including finances, time, resource availability, technical knowledge, and experience. It is within these constraints that God invites people today to choose to enter into and enjoy their relationship with him.

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6. Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, 2005), 46.

## Choices Are Made within Employment contexts

*Vocational disciple makers can facilitate safe communities where people can wrestle with some of the difficult choices they must make in their employment contexts.*  
—James Bruyn

Together, Adam and Eve had the choice to observe the constraints God established for their work. They could have chosen, guided by faith, hope, and love, to reflect their relationship as God's vice-regents to craft the raw material of God's creation into a sweet fragrant offering to him. Instead, guided by sensuality and desire for self-fulfillment, they sought self-actualization and thus destroyed their idyllic work environment (Genesis 3:4).

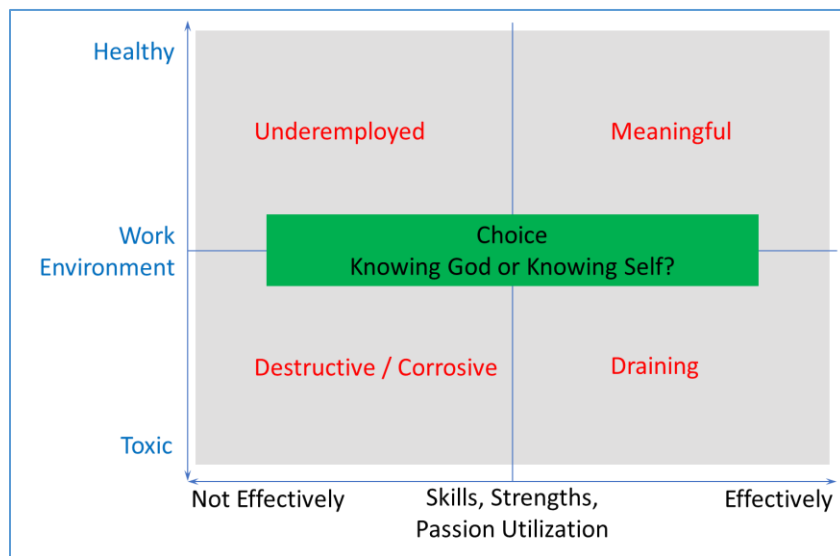
I suggest that nothing has changed since then. All people, regardless of their employment contexts, are daily faced with the opportunity, guided by faith, hope, and love, to craft their work into a sweet fragrant offering to God. Seeing work this way, they can say that work is good, enter the sabbath work/rest rhythm, and enjoy the people they work with. This reflects God's original ordering of the universe.<sup>7</sup> For many people who find a sense of purpose in their employment contexts, this is a relatively straightforward choice. For others, this may mean choosing to recraft their jobs to find a sense of purpose. Recrafting work reorients a person's focus from the tasks at hand, or the employment context to, God. Ultimately, this can change the design of the job, the work environment, or even a person's perspective of his or her work.<sup>8</sup>

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7. Joannes Paulus PP. II Laborem Exercens (#4). (14 September 1981) | John Paul II." Accessed March 18, 2019. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091981\\_laborem-exercens.html#%24I](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html#%24I).

8. This is not to say that Christians should not strive for justice for those who are in work contexts that are dark or in poisonous work relationships or perform tasks that are dangerous or illegal and that they risk their physical, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

Alternatively, those people who are guided by sensuality and desire for self-fulfillment can craft themselves and pursue self-actualization through their work. Today, Satan presents people in their workplaces with a twist on the temptation he presented Adam—namely, to abandon their high and holy privilege of sustaining, redeeming, and consummating God’s creation amid the anxieties, fears, and stressors of their workplaces for the sake of knowing themselves. Today, in a world corrupted by sin, these choices are often not black-and-white as they were for Adam and Eve (figure 5).



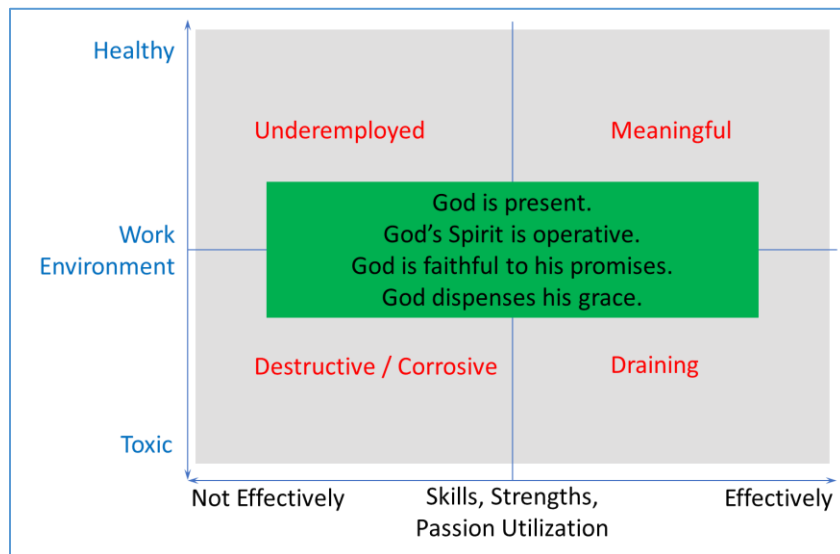
**Figure 5. Choices.** Regardless of their employment contexts, people daily choose to seek to know God or to seek to know themselves.

### Encountering God in All Employment contexts

*Vocational disciple makers have the immense privilege of sharing stories of people encountering God in all quadrants of this employment model.*  
—James Bruyn

God, the perfect Divine King who transcends all spatial limitations, is present in every point of space where people work but is not bounded by the constraints of any workplace. God is personally involved with the agonies and ecstasies of his children in their workplaces. God hears

their joy and groanings (Exodus 3:7). God sees and intimately enters into his children's experiences and feelings at their workplaces (figure 6).



**Figure 6. God's presence in the workplace.** God is present in all employment contexts.

The first story of God's grace occurs where Adam and Eve worked, in which the first couple chose in their workplace to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. After their disobedience, God does not hand Adam and Eve pink slips and call for a security detail of angels to march them out of the garden to stand naked in the brutal heat of the desert. Instead, we see the loving care of our Lord for his children as he provides Adam and Eve with clothing (Genesis 3:21). While the couple is banished from the garden and must live with the consequences of their sin, God blesses them with the means for survival by working the ground, from which they had been taken, and the ability to procreate, albeit painfully. As Delitzsch points out, by selecting the skins of beasts for the clothing of the first humans, and therefore causing the death or slaughter of beasts, God showed them how they might use the sovereignty they

possessed over the animals for their own good.<sup>9</sup> Could this have been the first example of vocational discipleship?

I suggest that except for God's grace and mercy, there would not be any work aligned to people's skills, strengths, or passions, or any work that occurs in healthy work environments (i.e., in the upper right quadrant of this employment model). In his grace, God continues to allow humanity, created in his image, the immense privilege of sustaining, redeeming, and consummating his creation through their work. In other words, I propose that were it not for God's grace and mercy, most work would occur in toxic environments ineffectively utilizing people's skills, strengths and passions (i.e., closer to the bottom left quadrant of this employment model).

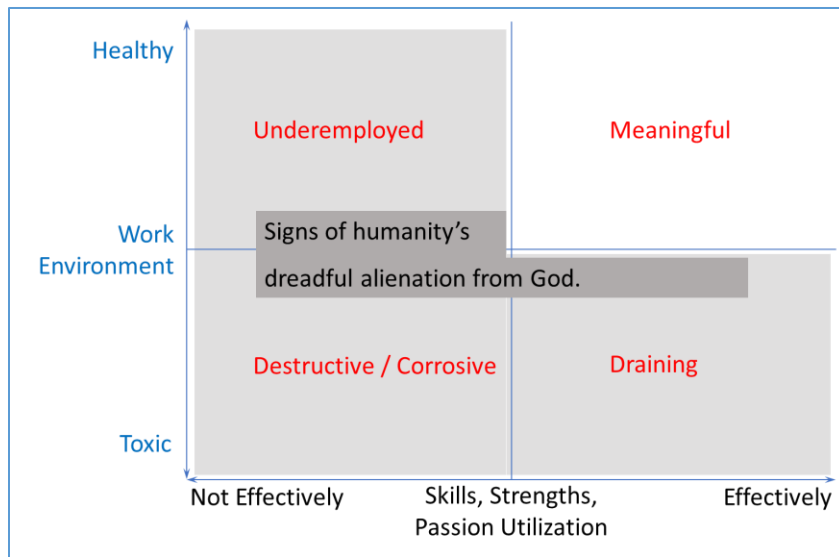
People's experiences that are not in the upper right quadrant are a reminder, as Calvin suggests, of the manifest signs of humanity's dreadful alienation from God (figure 7).<sup>10</sup> For some people, these experiences are an invitation to turn away from sin and towards the commands of God.<sup>11</sup> God's ways are beyond our understanding, and we may never get answers as to why some people are in dark workplaces. However, the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is our assurance that God's light shines in the darkest of places (John 1:5) and that the abounding grace and mercy of God can be experienced in any workplace.

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9. C. F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on Genesis Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on Genesis*, E-text version (Hendrickson Publishers, 1996, 2002), Olive Tree Edition

10. John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary* (1854, University of Minnesota, Digitized 18 Dec 2014)

11. Andrew Louth, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Volume 1: Genesis 1–11* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, nd), Olive Tree Edition.



**Figure 7. Alienation from God.** Employment contexts that are not in the upper right-hand quadrant are examples of the signs of humanity's dreadful alienation from God.

Jesus tells us that in this world we will have tribulation (John 16:33). Is it possible that Jesus allows us to experience the agonies and ecstasies of the workplace to help us grow in faith, hope and love? In every workplace, the sovereign providence of God is stronger than the deepest pit or the most profound loss. For those who encounter such a truth firsthand, there is almost no greater gift. In their workplaces, God invites people to fix their eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen since what is seen is temporary but what is unseen is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18).

God's love does not stand aside and look on suffering unmoved. God is part of it; therefore, God gives people the strength to bear things they did not think they could bear. And because God is present in every employment context, God helps a person's soul to grow strong and mature.<sup>12</sup> As Madeleine L'Engle points out, God does not protect people from bleeding but gives people the life-transfusing power of the blood of the Lamb, his blood so that they can live.

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12. Madeleine L'Engle, *A Stone for a Pillow* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986), 235.

“As long as there is pain in the universe, the Creator is part of that pain, and we bear our own small part in carrying it. It is bearable as long as the burden is shared.”<sup>13</sup> At those times when work is a burden, people can bear that burden with joy because God is always present in their workplaces sharing the burden with them.

### **The Cross of Christ and the Drama of the Workplace**

*Vocational disciple makers have the immense privilege of seeing lives transformed in the workplace by the cross of Christ.*  
—James Bruyn

Only the cross of Christ makes sense of the drama of the workplace. It might be a scandal to some and foolishness to others, but as St. Paul tells us, it is the power and the wisdom of God! To be human in any employment context is to recognize our brokenness and to be transformed by the one who healed our brokenness on the cross and whose name is and always shall be Love. The anxieties, the stressors, and the joys of the workplace do not come anywhere close to the time and place where the powers of darkness and death appeared to have triumphed—namely, the cross. At the cross, Jesus defeated the devil, dealt with death, and brought deliverance in every situation, including our workplaces.

Jesus was willing to trust God with what was given him—the time, the place, the Roman occupation, the limitations of the broken relationships around him, the brokenness of the religious system. Not only did Jesus trust God to work out his purposes in this dark context but

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13. L’Engle, *A Stone for a Pillow*, 239.

Jesus embraced the cross. Because Jesus trusted God, he invites all people to take up their cross daily and follow him, the Good Shepherd, in their employment contexts (Luke 9:23).

The cross does not eliminate suffering and death. Instead, it exposes the impotence of destructive powers to separate men and women from God. The love Jesus demonstrated on the cross does not extricate people from the arena of human need or toxic work environments, but it relieves the arena of its terror. The love of Christ locates the beleaguered, fearful self within the dynamics of giving and receiving love. Toxic workplaces become bearable for Christians because they do not need to take the ideals and terrors of the workplace with ultimate seriousness.<sup>14</sup>

As Pope Francis delivered in his Easter message, the resurrection of Christ is the victory of love over the evil that people encounter in their workplaces.<sup>15</sup> This victory does not bypass suffering and death but passes through them, opening a path in the abyss, transforming evil into good; this is the unique hallmark of the power of God.

After God carried the Israelites from Jerusalem into exile in Babylon, God instructed them to establish their families, to seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which he carried them, and to pray for that place.<sup>16</sup> In the same way, Christians are called today to carry God's presence into their employment contexts, whether or not their job is aligned with their skills, strengths, or passions. People cannot bring the presence of God into their workplaces when they

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14. William F. May, *The Physician's Covenant* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2000), 136–37.

15. "Full text: Pope Francis' Easter Urbi et Orbi Message 2020," *The Catholic World Report*, April 12, 2020, <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2020/04/12/full-text-pope-francis-easter-urbi-et-orbi-message-2020/>.

16. Jeremiah 29:4–9. In some instances, this might be physically dangerous, as it was for Daniel, Esther, Mordecai, Paul, Stephen. Seeking the peace and prosperity of the workplace should not be equated to tolerating evil or sinful behavior.



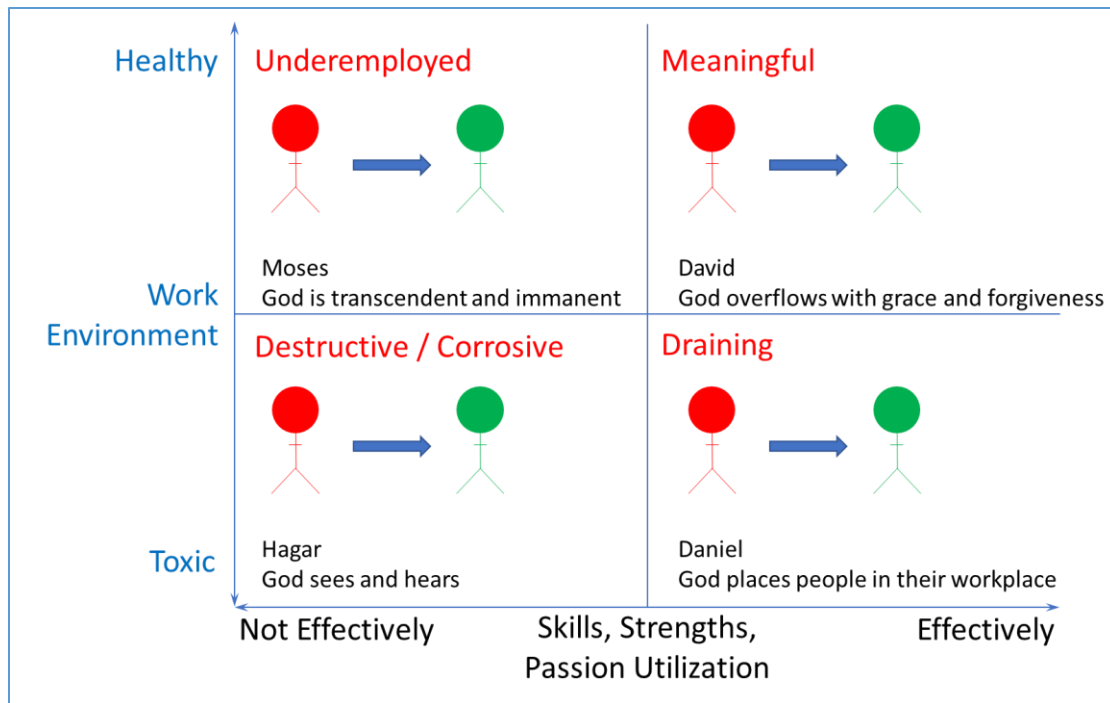
are constantly pursuing the perfect job in the perfect work environment, without stressors or strains. As Madeline L'Engle writes in *A Stone for a Pillow*, "Our desire to protect ourselves from pain [including the pain of the workplace] separates us from the Creator, and the life transfusing power of the blood of the Lamb."<sup>17</sup>

### **Examples from the Old Testament**

Experiences of work in the different quadrants described by this employment model began before the pyramids were built and have continued throughout history. For example, in the Old Testament we find David working in the upper right quadrant, Daniel working in the lower right quadrant, Moses working in the upper left quadrant for part of his career, and Hagar working in the bottom left quadrant (figure 8).

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17. L'Engle, *A Stone for a Pillow*, 239.



**Figure 8. Examples of how God reveals himself in different employment contexts.** The lives of Moses, David, Hagar, and Daniel illustrate that it is possible to live by faith in all employment contexts. It also shows a representative example of how God revealed himself in the unique situations of each of these individuals.

The Bible does not portray these individuals as perfect, but rather as people who have experienced God and had life-changing encounters with him in their workplaces. These examples provide hope that people can reflect their relationship as God’s vice-regent in their employment contexts in faith and offer their work as a sweet, fragrant offering to God. These stories provide examples of how vocational discipleship needs to be contextualized to the ecstasies, temptations, and agonies of the workplace.

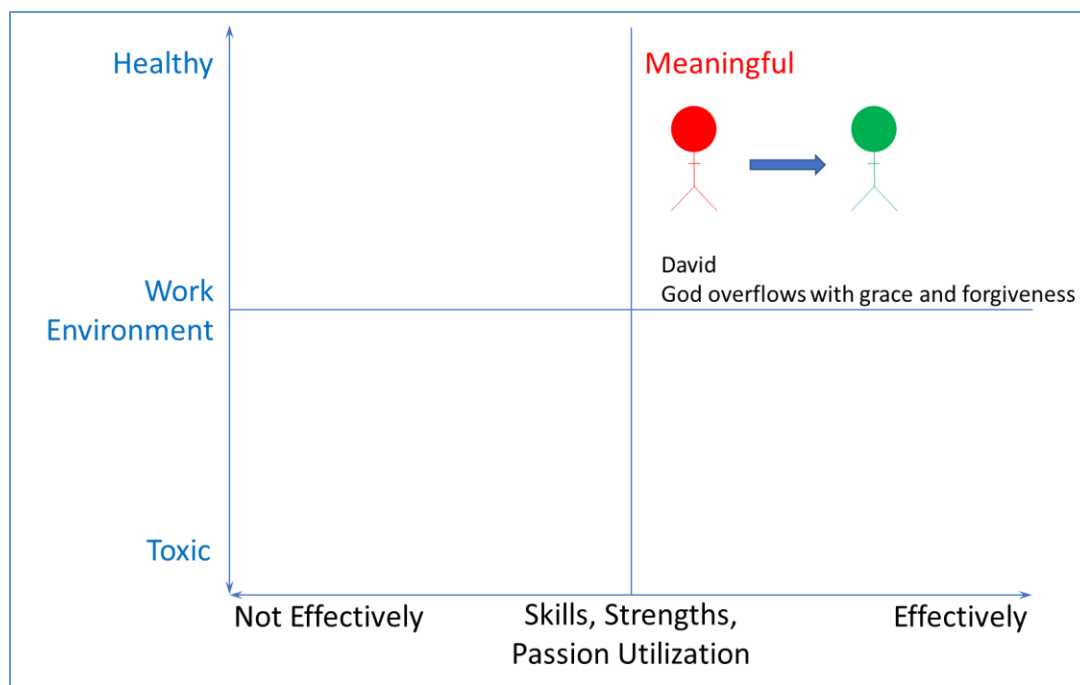
### **David's Example from the Upper Right Quadrant**

*One of the most challenging roles a vocational disciple maker may face is the role that Nathan had to play in David's life.*  
—2 Samuel 12

Working in a great job with great people, or the upper right quadrant of this employment model, can be a wonderful experience, enabling people to be a blessing to many others.

However, sin lurks in this quadrant, just like sin lurks in every quadrant, causing people to echo Paul's words in Romans 7:15 "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." Satan actively schemes to ensnare people no matter what their employment context is. As much as Satan tries to convince people to the contrary, happiness does not come from working in the upper right quadrant. Happiness is completely dependent upon our relationship with God.

At the pinnacle of his career, David discovered that in his job, which was positioned in the upper right quadrant, he was just as susceptible to sin and temptation as he was when he worked in jobs in the other quadrants (figure 9).



**Figure 9. David—God overflows with grace and forgives.** When King David was at the penultimate point of his career, sin was crouching like a roaring lion waiting to consume him. In that fulfilling employment context, David discovered God’s amazing grace and forgiveness.

When David was established as king, and while his men were at war, David caught sight of a beautiful woman, Bathsheba, and slept with her. When he discovered she was pregnant with his child, he arranged to have her husband, Uriah, murdered on the battlefield. David’s story reminds us that no matter what employment context people are in, every person is prone to sin, and that while people love God, too often they love themselves even more.

King David, despite being king, possessing all the promises that God had made to him and working in a job that utilized his skills with great people, discovered that nobody has the power to take away his integrity except himself. No person, however blessed by God to be working in the upper right quadrant of this employment model, can rest on their laurels and assume that anything goes.

A strong consciousness of a person's sinfulness is a necessary antidote to pride and self-glory, which are the root causes of sin.<sup>18</sup> Everybody makes choices at work, whether big or small, that draw them away from living in the mercy and compassion of God. At times people's behavior or words hurt their coworkers. When people view their jobs in terms of status rather than of task, they will likely begin to fail at the task and, therefore, cease in any meaningful sense in their work.<sup>19</sup>

Sin manifests itself in many ways at work, including a person's thoughts, words, and deeds. Sin arises at work when people are not trusting in God; hiding from others; or failing to listen to God's instruction, teaching, and counsel. Sin is like a shameful waking nightmare that is always present in every workplace.

Fortunately, when people sin, regardless of what quadrant they are working in, forgiveness is waiting. God forgives people out of his unfailing love, abundant mercy, and great compassion. God has more than enough mercy and compassion to deal with any person's sin (see also Ezekiel 36:25–36). The joy of forgiveness (Psalm 52:12) is as bright, pure, and beautiful as a lily. This joy surpasses any feelings people may have when they work in a great job with great people.

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18. Quentin F. Wesselschmidt, ed., Psalms 51–150, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, Old Testament vol. 8 (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2007), 1.

19. Mary J. Evans, *The Message of Samuel: Personalities, Potential, Politics and Power*, The Bible Speaks Today Series, J.A. Motyer ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004), 208.

## Daniel's Example from the Bottom Right Quadrant

*Who were the vocational disciple makers who equipped Daniel before he was taken into captivity in Babylon?<sup>20</sup>*  
—James Bruyn

Daniel was a handsome, intelligent, well-educated young man whom God blessed with skills in administration and leadership. He and his friends were found to have more wisdom and understanding than any of their contemporaries. He was employed as a senior advisor for the Babylonian government.

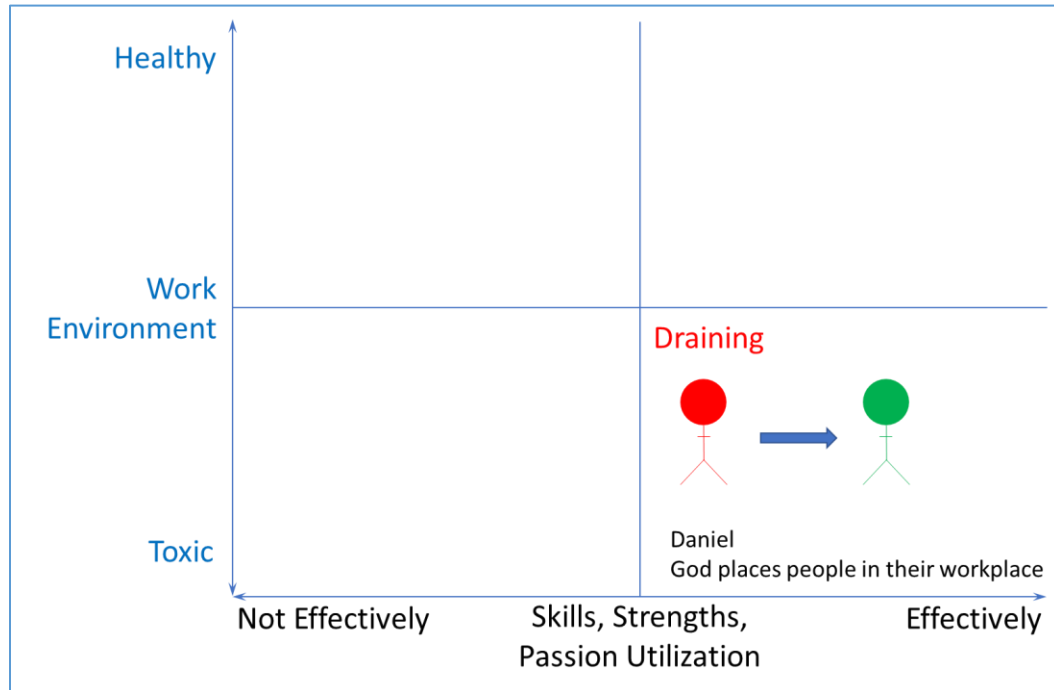
One might expect that we would find Daniel working in the upper right quadrant with peers who respected him and a leader who supported him. We might anticipate stories of how he served in a leadership capacity at his local church.

Instead, we see Daniel working in the bottom right quadrant for an employer who wants to roast him alive (figure 10). We discover his coworkers want nothing more than to feed him to the lions. Daniel works in a foreign land far from any Christian fellowship. He did not go to this job as a missionary or a tentmaker. In fact, he did not even choose this job. He was forced into it. Yet in the middle of his employment context, some unbelievers respected and appreciated Daniel.

Daniel's story is fascinating because it is all about God, who is the hero in his story! It is the story of the mercy of God that caused Daniel to experience shalom when he was reviled by unbelievers. Daniel's story reminds us that God, in his omniscience, places people, their leaders, and their coworkers in specific employment contexts.

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20. Is it possible that Daniel engaged with Jeremiah and some of the other prophets, as Jeremiah wrestled with how to communicate the message God had laid on his heart prior to being taken to Babylon?



**Figure 10. Daniel—God places people in their situations.** Gifted by God in administration and leadership, Daniel finds himself working in one of the most toxic environments in history. In that draining employment context, Daniel declares by faith that God changes times and seasons; deposes kings and raises up others (Daniel 2:21).

Daniel never gets an answer to the question as to why he and his friends were in exile in Babylon—we are never told if Daniel ever asked this question. Daniel never finds out why God has placed him to work with people who want to feed him to the lions or roast him alive. Daniel cannot even say that he chose to work in a toxic environment so that he could evangelize his manager. One thing Daniel does discover is that God changes times and seasons; deposes kings and raises up others (Daniel 2:21). We are not told if Daniel led anyone in Babylon to faith in God. However, Daniel does advise Nebuchadnezzar to renounce his sins (Daniel 4:24–27) after interpreting Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, yet the king does not listen to Daniel. Ultimately, it is God who humbles Nebuchadnezzar, bringing him to the point in his life where he honors and glorifies God (Daniel 4:34ff).

By choosing to live righteously before God, by choosing to wait for God's timing, Daniel was blessed by God with the wisdom to speak God's revelation and truth in the life of three foreign kings. Because of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar's magicians, conjurors, and wise men keep their heads (Daniel 2:12ff).

Daniel never strived to find a different employer. He quietly accepted his workplace as God's will. It was in his work environment that Daniel saw God's grace in his life and allowed God to be the hero in his story.

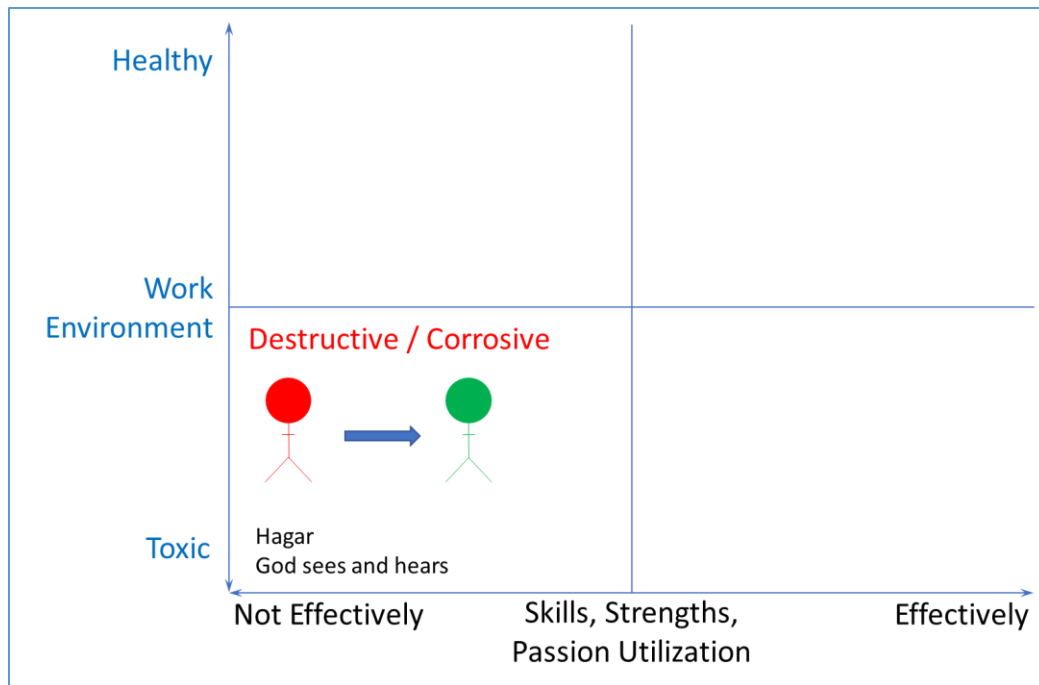
### **Hagar's Example from the Bottom Left Quadrant**

*Vocational disciple makers have a front-row seat to watch God reveal himself and display his character and miraculous power through people like Hagar working in toxic environments with jobs that are not aligned to their skills.*  
—James Bruyn

Hagar was a young immigrant woman working as a maid for Abram and Sarai, who were wealthy aging farmers. We are not told if Hagar was supporting family back home, certainly she did not choose this job.

Abram slept with Hagar, which resulted in a son, but once Hagar was pregnant, she began to despise Sarai, who then mistreated her and sent her away. Although we are not told, it is quite probable that Hagar, a victim of workplace bullying, is also doing work that is not aligned with her skills, strengths, or passions. In other words, she was probably working in the bottom left quadrant (figure 11).





**Figure 11. Hagar—God sees and hears.** Abused by her masters, Hagar runs away only to discover that God is El Roi, the God who sees, and saw her destructive employment context.

Would God notice an abused servant running away from a toxic work environment doing work she did not enjoy? One might expect that if God noticed her, he would not send her back to that employment context for another fourteen years before she is fired. Instead, God reveals himself to Hagar as the God who sees and hears.

God in his grace does not look at whether Hagar's or Sarai's sins are responsible for Hagar's employment context. God sees Hagar as a precious person, fashioned with wisdom, created in his image, and he calls her by name, asking, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" (Genesis 16:8).

As Waltke points out, God seeks out the sinful and rejected and reaches out to Hagar with great compassion.<sup>21</sup> Hagar is the only woman in the ancient Near Eastern literature whom a deity calls her by name, and she is the only person in the Old Testament who confers a name upon God. That name, “The One Who Sees Me” and “The One I See,” epitomizes the relationship all Christians have with God. This name anticipates the compassion Jesus showers upon all of us in whatever employment context we are in.

The angel sends Hagar back to her occupation, back to Sarai, and tells Hagar to submit to Sarai. Hagar is not promised relief from her suffering; all she receives is reassurance that her suffering had been seen and would continue to be noticed by God. Not exactly the instructions people would want from God when they are working in a toxic environment. God sends Hagar back with promises in which she can place her hope including that she would have descendants too numerous to count. God tells her to name her son ‘God will hear’ or *Ishmael*, as a reminder that God always hears her. God sends Hagar back with the confidence that he sees her. In faith, in response to what the angel has told her, Hagar declares that God is ‘the God who sees’. In the same way today, when God asks people to return to their same employment contexts, God sends them back with the assurance that they can trust in his promises.

People working in the bottom left quadrant (or in any quadrant for that matter) often feel they need to trust in either their political acumen or the strength or wisdom of others to escape their situations. God sees all things and extends an invitation to trust in his strength and wisdom. God invites people to be still so that he can display his wonder and power to a watching world! Those who offer their work as a sweet, fragrant offering to God while working in the bottom left

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21. Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2001), ProQuest Ebook Central, 256.

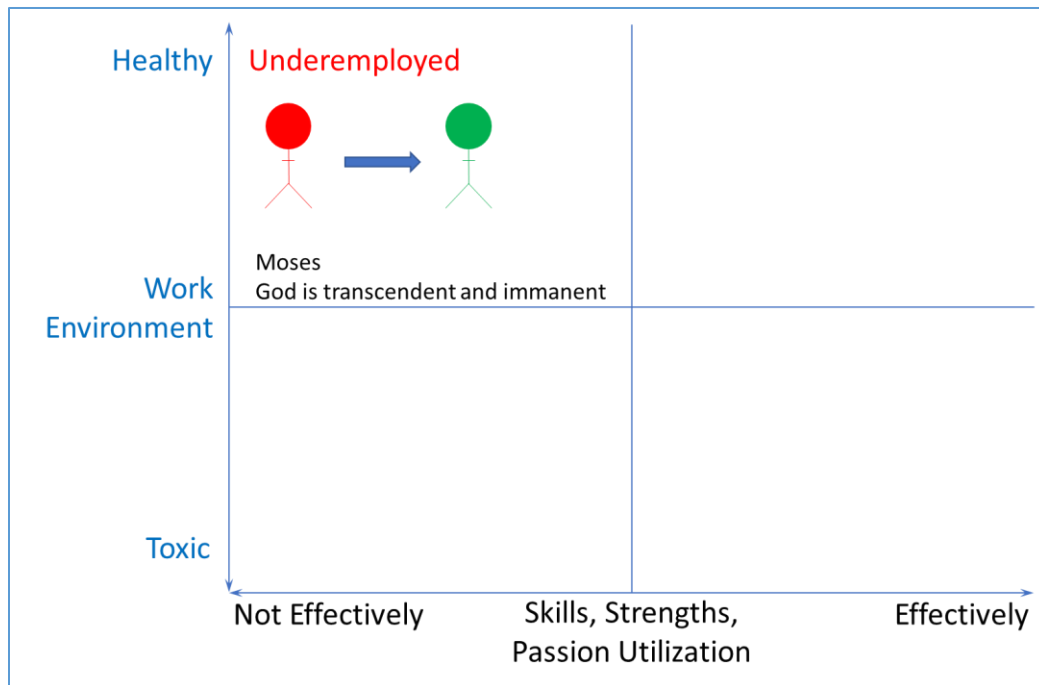
quadrant will experience God and develop a solid foundation to work for justice in their contexts if that is what God calls them to do. In other cases, building on this solid foundation, with the power of the Holy Spirit they may be able to craft their jobs into something fulfilling.

### **Moses's Example from the Upper Left Quadrant**

*Sometimes, like Jethro, all a vocational disciple maker needs to do is create a safe, quiet space and watch and wait.*  
—James Bruyn

After working his way up in the ranks of the Egyptian court, Moses spent forty years of his career underemployed. While he had been accustomed to working in luxurious office complexes, his new job had him working outdoors, sleeping on the cold ground by night, and experiencing the burning sun by day. Now he wandered over rough and desert places in the arid wilderness alone. In his previous career, he had led teams of people; now he led sheep.

Yet all was not bleak in his new career. The godly man he worked for, Jethro, would become his mentor for the rest of his career. Jethro also had several beautiful daughters, one of whom would become Moses's wife. Underemployed, Moses patiently worked in this career for forty years until one day the Lord spoke to him (figure 12).



**Figure 12. Moses—God is transcendent and immanent.** Moses, a former leader in Egypt, spends forty years in the backside of the desert as a shepherd. In this underutilized employment context, Moses discovers that God is not only transcendent but immanent in his workplace, and in the corrosive environment, his fellow Israelites were working as slaves in Israel.

Quietly, Moses graciously accepted his job as a shepherd as God’s gift, becoming a wise steward of this job and preparing himself for God’s yet-to-be-revealed next step for his life. Far from the excitement and glamor of palace life in Egypt, Moses learned in the waiting to focus on God’s strength and to occupy himself with the nature of God. While we are told little about Moses’s life or work conditions, we can surmise that Moses was quietly faithful to God where he was. Then one day when Moses least expected, God showed up dramatically.

When God appears to Moses at the burning bush, Moses realizes that not only is God transcendent but also immanent. At the burning bush, the veil between heaven and earth was parted. As F. B. Meyer says, God proved there to Moses that “Every blow of the hand that buffets you, every cut of the scourge, every scorching hour under the noontide sun, every lonely

hour when lovers and friends stand aloof, every step into the valley of the shadow, every moment of sleep beneath the juniper tree, is watched by the eyes that never slumber nor sleep.”<sup>22</sup>

People working in a dead-end career or in a job where they feel underutilized often feel like the hands of the clock never move, and the end of the workday cannot come soon enough. The world discourages people from waiting and encourages them to immediately gratify their desires. However, career change is often not instantaneous, and expectations of immediate gratification can increase people’s anxiety about their job situations.

Christians trapped in jobs in the upper left quadrant often ask, “How long, O Lord?” What God wants to do in people while they wait is far more precious than any promises of this world, including a different job that one may pine for. Waiting is part of the process of becoming exactly who God created people to be. While they wait, God is at work in them, producing perseverance, character, and hope (Romans 5:3–4; James 1:4). Ultimately, waiting is about people’s lives, like precious gold in God’s eyes, being refined by fire (1 Peter 1:7).

Waiting requires humility, believing that the Lord is God; that the Lord has made us; that we are his people and the sheep of his pasture (Psalm 100:3). One can wait with hope, knowing that the Lord is good, that his love endures forever, and that his faithfulness continues through all generations (Psalm 100:5). A person can wait with humility, knowing that there is one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all (Ephesians 4:6). When people wait with humility and hope, they can shout for joy to the Lord; they can serve the Lord with gladness; they can come before him with joyful songs; they can enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; they can give thanks to him and praise his holy name (Psalm 100:1–4).

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22. F. B. Meyer, *Devotional Commentary on Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1978), 40.

Those who offer their work as a sweet, fragrant offering to God while working in the upper left quadrant are being prepared by God, just as Moses was, for the next phase of their careers. However, God never promises that the next phase will be better or different.

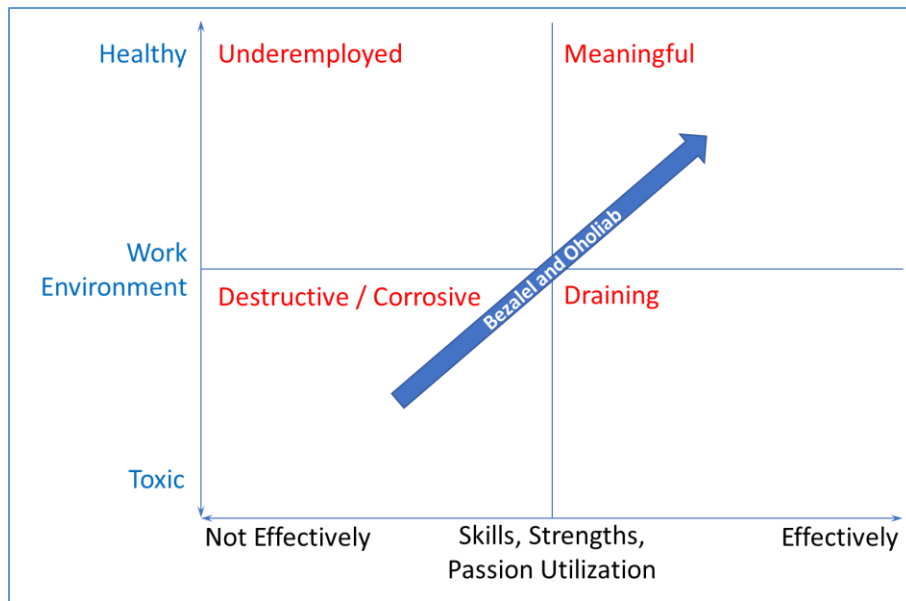
### **Extruded by God into a Better Employment context**

*At times God may use a vocational disciple maker to provide the resources people need to sustain them and prepare them for new employment contexts.*  
—James Bruyn

Employment contexts change over time. Company leadership may change, external influences beyond the control of the company change—such as a demand for a product or the price of natural resources. These changes alter the stress of the work environment. At times, people are suddenly thrust into an employment context that has shifted into a different quadrant—for example, when a project is cancelled, or a person is assigned to a new position.

Sometimes careers start in the crucible of a toxic work environment. In these cases, God may or may not extrude the person into a better position. Even in toxic work environments that make life miserable, God daily, richly blesses with the people and the emotional, financial, physical, and spiritual resources necessary for each day and the future God has planned.

Bezalel and Oholiab wisely stewarded these blessings. While we are not told the details of their work environment or how they learned their skills, we can surmise that while they worked as slaves in Egypt, their work environment was probably miserable and oppressive (Exodus 2:25; 3:7, 9). Honing their God-given skills while in slavery in Egypt prepared them for the day when God extruded them into a career in the upper right quadrant (figure 13).



**Figure 13. Extruded by God into a better employment context.** Sometimes work situations change for the better. This was the case for Oholiab and Bezalel, who learned their technical skills working as slaves in the corrosive environment of Egypt and were later extruded by God to lead the building of the tabernacle.

The Bible jumps into the middle of their story in Exodus 25–30. God tells Moses that he has chosen Bezalel and filled him with the Spirit of God with wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and all kinds of skills to make artistic designs in gold, silver, and bronze; to cut and set stones; to work in wood; and to engage in all kinds of crafts (Exodus 31:3–5). Moreover, God appointed Oholiab to help him and gave the ability to all the skilled workers to fashion everything God had commanded Moses to make (Exodus 31:6). Although their calling was special, as Calvin points out, “No one excels even in the most despised and humble handicraft, except in so far as God’s Spirit works in him.”<sup>23</sup>

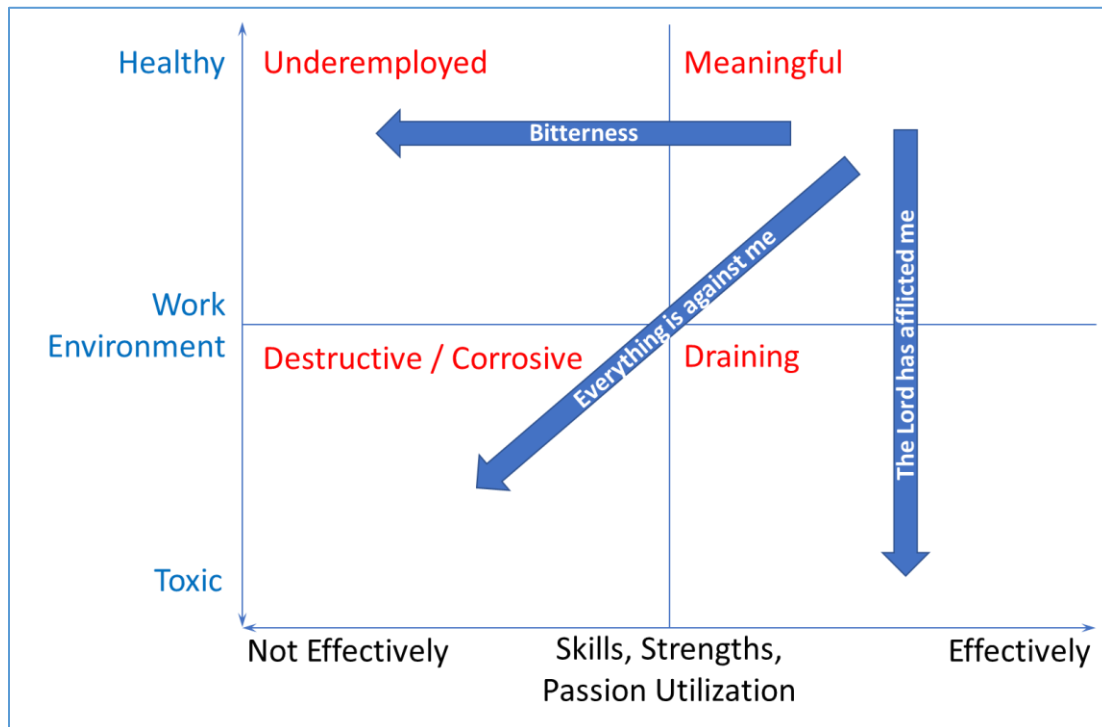
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23. John Calvin, *Commentaries*, vol. 5 (Published 1854, University of Minnesota, Digitized 18 Dec 2014), 291.

## When People Hit the Wall

*Vocational disciple makers have the opportunity to observe God's redeeming love as they walk with people throughout their careers and journeys between 'Why God?' and 'Wow! Look what God has done!'*  
—James Bruyn

At times in a person's career, he or she may be working in a great work environment (upper right quadrant). Then suddenly life changes and they are cast into a different context. In this world, everything is not always going to turn out all right, with all the strings neatly tied and justice triumphant (figure 14).



**Figure 14. Hitting a wall.** Sometimes work situations change for the worse. At those times, a person can be tempted to respond like Naomi with bitterness and declare that the “Lord has afflicted me,” or like Jacob declaring, “Everything is against me.”

When work situations change, people may look at their shifting employment contexts through their ethnic, socioeconomic, religious, national, or experiential grids for an explanation.



Often this is unsatisfying because nobody sees all that is present, and what people do see is often distorted by the bias of their operating grid. If it were not so, they would be omniscient.<sup>24</sup> This often leads to questioning God. God invites people to come to him with their questions. As the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke wrote, “Those who live their questions now, may perhaps gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.”<sup>25</sup> Questions never threaten God, who is constantly calling people. Questions never threaten God, who affirms that love is stronger than hate, blessing stronger than cursing.<sup>26</sup> When people ask questions, God gives a redemptive answer that opens a person’s eyes and ears to see the good in what God has created. An answer that moves people from their comfortable ruts in the wilderness of questions with no easy answers to an answer that focuses on the person of Jesus, not the problem.<sup>27</sup>

When a person’s employment context radically changes, one possibility is to respond in despair and cry out, “Everything is against me!” This was Jacob’s response when his sons returned to him in the middle of famine after going to Egypt to get grain. One of his sons, Simeon, did not return with them. After his sons had told Jacob that the ruler in Egypt had ordered them to bring Benjamin when they returned for more food, Jacob said to them, “You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me!” (Genesis 42:36). When Jacob cried, “Everything is

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24. Dan B. Allender, *Leading with a Limp* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2006), loc. 1400 of 3401, Kindle.

25. Rainer Maria Rilke, accessed 2020-04-04, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/717-be-patient-toward-all-that-is-unsolved-in-your-heart>.

26. L’Engle, *A Stone for A Pillow*, 140.

27. L’Engle, *A Stone for A Pillow*, 105.

against me!” from his perspective of oneness with God, with his children, and with the world as he knew it, all was fractured. Satan had succeeded. God’s plan was thwarted.

Another response to a radical change in an employment context is bitterness. This was how Naomi felt as she returned from Moab after her husband and two sons had passed away. She tells the Israelites to call her “Mara [bitter] because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me” (Ruth 1:20–21). From Naomi’s perspective, God had stripped her of everything that had filled her life.

Alternatively, those whose employment contexts have drastically changed can humbly surrender their wills and lives into God’s hands. This was the choice Jesus made in the garden of Gethsemane. While admitting to Peter, James, and John that his soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death, he comes to his Father in prayer. In honesty he asks his Father that if it is possible to take this cup from him. In humility he surrenders his will to his Father and says, “Yet not as I will, but as you will” (Matthew 26:36–42).

When people surrender their will and lives into God’s hands, it means moving on to wherever God is calling them. Many times, this may involve scaling the mountain of forgiveness, and echoing Jesus’s words “Father forgive them”. When people forgive those who have caused a radical change in their careers, they are free to live in the reality of the present, not in the past that is gone, nor in an illusionary world of the future. Forgiveness allows them to see that God heals and redeems.

While people may be tempted to curse when their work circumstances change for the worse, they can choose to bless without manipulation, without insisting that everything be straightened out immediately. In this muddled world, it is not always easy to bless, but that is

what God calls people to do. To curse is not only to wound another but also to put ourselves in bondage. To bless is to be made free to bear God's love.<sup>28</sup>

When people turn their hearts to blessing, they share in heaven's blessing. Blessing simply means turning those they need to bless over to God, knowing that his powerful love will do what their own feeble love or lack of it will not.<sup>29</sup> Before people can ask for a blessing from God, they must be able to accept themselves as blessed in their current employment contexts—not perfect, not virtuous, not sinless, but just blessed.<sup>30</sup> The Lord's Prayer starts with the phrase "Our Father who is in heaven" to remind us that we are blessed to be called his children.

### **People's Expectations of God in Their Employment contexts**

*Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"  
—John 1:38*

Many of the disciples thought that Jesus would physically deliver Israel from the constraints imposed on them by the Roman Empire. But after the crucifixion, they were bewildered and perplexed, their hopes were dashed, their dreams were shattered.

Just as the disciples wondered if Jesus would deliver Israel from Roman occupation, many people today also wonder if Jesus will deliver them from their work situations and move them into an employment context described by the upper right quadrant of this employment

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28. L'Engle, *A Stone for a Pillow*, 117.

29. L'Engle, *A Stone for a Pillow*, 121.

30. L'Engle, *A Stone for a Pillow*, 125.

model. Jesus never delivered his disciples or the early church from the oppression and persecution of the Roman Empire. All he gave them was deliverance from their sins, the privilege to be called children of God and the Holy Spirit, which was more than sufficient. Today, Jesus does not promise to deliver people from their employment contexts. God does, however, graciously give the Holy Spirit, and that is sufficient for any and every employment context people have experienced, are experiencing, or will experience.

### **The Glory of Working in Any Quadrant**

*For the vocational disciple maker, their greatest joy may come from seeing men and women graciously embrace their employment contexts as a gift from God!*  
—James Bruyn

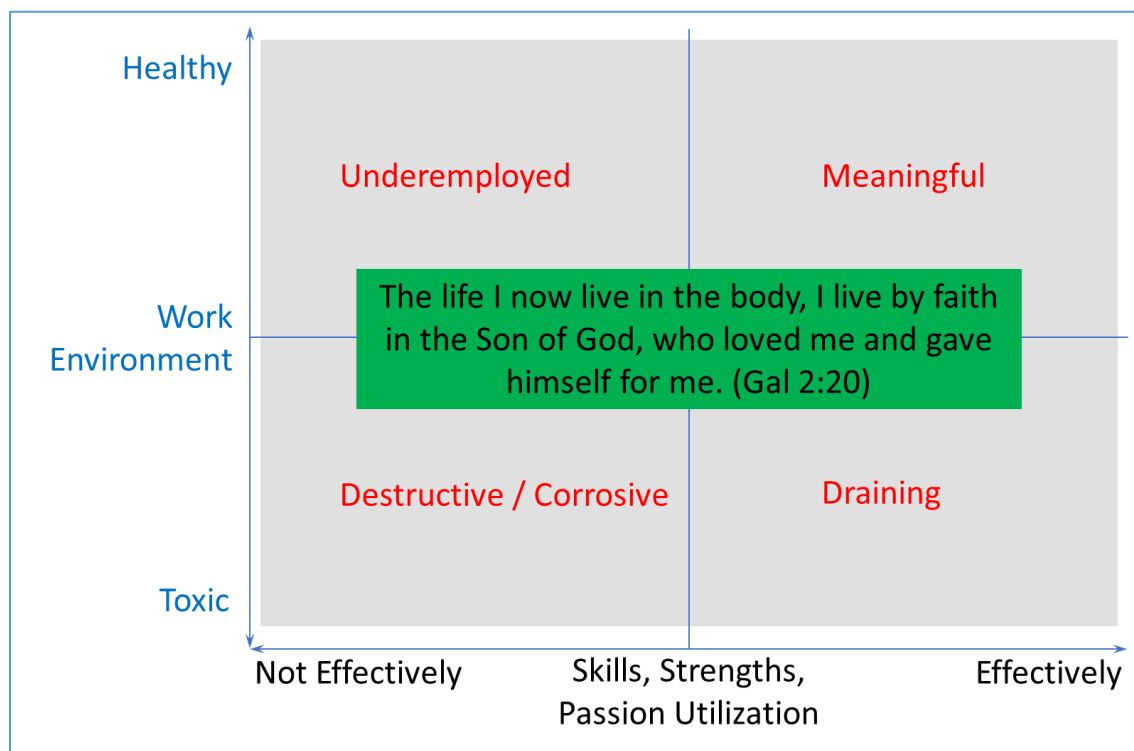
The men and women in these examples are commended in Hebrews 11 for their faith, which made them confident in what they hoped for and assured about what they did not see (Hebrews 11:1–2). These were men and women of whom God was not ashamed to be called their God (Hebrews 11:16).

Each of the stories in this chapter illustrates one example of how God may work in the life of a person working in the different quadrants. These lessons should not be constrained to the specific quadrants that they are illustrated in. God is far too great to be limited to work in a specific way. God reveals to his people the facets of his character they need in their employment contexts so that they can enter his gates with thanksgiving and glorify God's holy name in their workplaces.

The glory of working in any quadrant is being, as Henri Nouwen says, a “wounded healer”. “When a person witnesses from their own wounds, the wounded can identify with that person. Also, when a person witnesses from their wounds the glory goes to God and not to

them.”<sup>31</sup> Knowing God’s mercy, God’s unfailing love, God’s great compassion, God’s cleansing power, and God’s ability to teach wisdom, as well as being filled with the joy and gladness of forgiveness and having had God create a pure heart in them and renew a steadfast spirit within them, people can testify to the joy of God’s salvation (Psalm 51:8–13).

The pinnacle of any career, whether of a pastor, a barista, a plumber, or a corporate executive, is to be able to say with the apostle Paul, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20) (figure 15).



**Figure 15. The pinnacle of a career.** The pinnacle of any career is to be able to live by faith in whatever employment context God calls a person to.

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31. Don Williams, Commentary on Psalm 51, *Psalms 1–72, The Preacher’s Commentary*, vol. 13 (Nashville, TN: Word Publishers, 1986).

## CHAPTER THREE

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Faith at Work**

Ecklund's research of 7,305 practicing American Christians found that 28 percent of evangelical Christians heard their faith leader often/very often discuss how congregants should behave at work, while 23 percent said that their faith leader spoke about the meaning of work often or very often.<sup>1</sup>

Ecklund's research found that interviewees wanted their churches and pastors to provide more encouragement to and support for people around their work. This suggests that this work environment model could be helpful to pastors to identify the felt needs of their congregants. Topics Ecklund identified include the following

- Communicating respect for work itself in all its varied forms; and helping people find dignity and value in what they do even if they are working in jobs that they are not passionate about but must have to financially care for their families (e.g., people who may not be working in the upper right quadrant of this work environment model).
- Providing theological framing that you can seek and serve Christ in every person in your work.
- Seeing the "purpose of God" in work that is perceived to be secular (e.g., How can my job be more spiritually meaningful?)

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1. Elaine Howard Ecklund, Denise Daniels and Rachel Schneider, "From Secular to Sacred: Bringing Work to Church." *Religions* 2020, 121, 442; doi:10.3390/rel11090442, www.mdpi.com/journal/religions, August 2020.

- Avoiding jargon and helping church members see that no aspect of life is beyond our relationship with God.
- Encouraging people to be the best they can be no matter what their jobs are.
- Paying attention to supporting those who might be struggling with difficulties in their careers or work environments.
- Being open and nonjudgmental so that people can feel comfortable going to them with any issues they are facing in the workplace.
- Getting to know church members and their work-related struggles so they can provide effective support tailored to individual needs, including offering resources like prayer and counselling.
- Providing tangible ways to make a difference, such as helping with writing resumes.
- Encouraging congregants to persevere in times of work difficulty, not to be afraid to make changes to their work if needed, or to wait because God might have them in this place for a season.
- Supporting people in working through ethical dilemmas, workplace conflicts, and stress.
- Exhibiting more empathy for working people, including struggles they might have with inflexible schedules, balancing family and work demands, and financial challenges.
- Providing more targeted support toward specific professions, groups, and working women.
- Supporting people in the emotional and practical challenges of job seeking.
- Teaching how to express faith appropriately or engage with different religious or political views in the workplace.
- Helping to navigate a diverse work environment.

- Promoting Christian values, including compassion and understanding others.<sup>2</sup>

### **Spiritual Expression in the Workplace**

*Does the rise in interest in workplace spirituality create an opportunity for the vocational disciple maker?*  
—James Bruyn

While faith leaders might not explicitly teach about faith and work, according to Ecklund, 77 percent of evangelicals agree (somewhat or strongly) that the skills and habits from their faith communities help them at work.<sup>3</sup> This is consistent with the stories of Moses, David, Hagar, and Daniel from chapter two of this thesis-project.

Similarly, Tombaugh’s research suggests that spiritual expression in the workplace allows personal spiritual values to actively influence people’s everyday thoughts, behaviors, and interactions.<sup>4</sup>

According to the literature, some of the benefits of workplace spirituality include the following

- increased creativity, intuition
- improved ethical behavior<sup>5</sup>

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2. Ecklund, “From Secular to Sacred”, 11–17.

3. Ecklund, “From Secular to Sacred”, 8.

4. Jay. R. Tombaugh, Clifton Mayfield, Roger Durand, “Spiritual Expression at Work: Exploring the active voice of workplace spirituality,” *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, Vol 19, No 2. (2011): 150.

5. See also Christopher Lowery et al., “A Research Note on the Relationships among Spirituality, Contextual Variables, and Perceptions of Ethics in the Workplace,” *Journal of Managerial Issues* Vol. XXVI, Number 4 (Winter 2014): 408–23.



- lessened feelings of alienation from work, self, and others, and therefore more whole individuals
- increased empowerment
- increased concern with the environment
- better leadership
- stronger more cohesive vision and purpose
- enhanced team and community building<sup>6, 7</sup>
- increased motivation, organizational commitment, and adaptability both individually and at the team level<sup>8</sup>
- belief that work is meaningful and has a higher purpose that is aligned with an individual's values and beliefs<sup>9</sup>
- enhanced mental and physical well-being and quality of life<sup>10</sup>

The stories of Moses, David, Hagar, and Daniel from chapter two also describe the impact of individuals living by faith at their workplaces. This is in agreement with Mitroff's

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6. Marjolein Lips-Wiersma and Collen Mills, "Coming out of the closet: Negotiating spiritual expression in the workplace," *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 17, 3 (2002): 186.

7. Similar observations are made by Jafae Ahangaran et al., in "Meta-analysis of the effects of spirituality in the organization," *International Journal of Advanced and Applied Sciences*, 3(1) (2016): 22–31.

8. Carole L. Jurkiewicz and Robert A Giacalone, "A Values Framework for Measuring the Impact of Workplace Spirituality on Organizational Performance," *Journal of Business Ethics*, 49, 2 (Jan 2004): 135.

9. Val Kinjerski and Berna Skrypnek, "Four Paths to Spirit at Work: Journeys of Personal Meaning, Fulfillment, Well-Being and Transcendence Through Work," *The Career Development Quarterly*, 56, 4 (Jun 2008): 320.

10. Alan Bester and Julian Muller, "Religion an obstacle to workplace spirituality and employee wellness?" *Verbum et Ecclesia* 38(1), a1779), <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v38i1.1779>, 3.

research which demonstrates that workplace spirituality results in increased profitability because employees bring more of their “complete selves” to work.<sup>11</sup> Jurkiewicz and Giacalone suggest that organizational cultures embodying transcendent goals are more productive and that cultural factors related to workplace spirituality override the economic-political environment as an influence on worker productivity, ethics, values, exercise of authority, innovation, etc.<sup>12</sup> Marques suggests that there is a positive interaction between spirituality, emotional intelligence, and Six Sigma quality management practices.<sup>13</sup>

This literature, therefore, suggests that the vocational disciple maker who understands and addresses the employment context of the people they are discipling could have a positive impact on the individuals they are discipling and the companies where they work (Appendix A illustrates this in further detail). However, the vocational disciple maker should be cautioned not to make this their primary objective, for the primary purpose of the Christian faith is neither workplace profitability nor improved employee performance but a relationship with God. As Buszka suggests, Christianity incorporates not only spirituality or the affecting ‘being’ in faith (orthopathy) but also religion or the behavioral ‘doing’ of faith (orthopraxy) and faith or the cognitive ‘knowing’ of faith (orthodoxy).<sup>14</sup>

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11. Ian Mitroff and Elizabeth Denton, “A Study of Spirituality in the Workplace,” *Sloan Management Review*, 40 (Summer 1999): 83.

12. Carol L. Jurkiewicz and Robert A. Giacalone, “A Values Framework for Measuring the Impact of Workplace Spirituality on Organizational Performance,” *Journal of business Ethics*, Jan 2004, 130.

13. Joan Marques, “Linking Quality Management and Emotional Intelligence to Workplace Spirituality,” *Organization Development Journal*, 26, 4 (Winter 2008): 87.

14. Sharlene Buszka and Timothy Ewest *Integrating Christian Faith and Work Individual, Occupational, and Organizational Influences and Strategies* (Houston, TX: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 79.

Christians living by faith in the workplace incarnate the gospel. Christians who embrace the mystery and grace of God in their day-to-day jobs make the gospel accessible to their coworkers. As Pope John Paul said, it is both the duty and possibility of Christians to live the gospel while remaining immersed in the world, to be united with God in the world in whatever situation they find themselves in.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, Christians need to be able to articulate how they are united with God in their work situations.

Wisdom is required to negotiate the nuances of spirituality in the workplace, since spirituality in the workplace is conceptualized as roomy enough to capture everything from Christian to Muslim to New Age to atheist philosophies.<sup>16</sup> Definitions of spirituality in the workplace range from an emphasis on a personal experience of the sacred to feelings of being connected with one's complete self, others, and the entire universe.<sup>17,18</sup> The practices of spirituality in the workplace include yoga, meditation, and nature walks.<sup>19</sup>

Based on Mitroff's research, vocational disciple makers should be cognizant that while employees might wish ardently to express their spirituality in the workplace, they are hesitant to do so because they are afraid of offending their peers. Mitroff suggests that these fears could exist because they are not aware of positive role models for fostering spirituality in the

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15. Fr. C. John McCloskey III, "The Meaning of Vocation," *The Catholic Thing*, accessed 17 October 2020, <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2016/10/02/the-meaning-of-vocation/>.

16. Anne Marie Gockel, "The trend toward spirituality in the workplace." *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 41, 157

17. Gockel, "The trend toward spirituality in the workplace", 157.

18. Mitroff and Denton, "A Study of Spirituality in the Workplace," 83.

19. Tombaugh, Mayfield, and Durand, "Spiritual Expression at Work, 148.

workplace.<sup>20</sup> Further research is needed on the impact of positive Christian role models in the workplace.

It is interesting to observe that the emphasis on workplace spirituality does not consider people's employment contexts. Further research is required to understand if workplace spirituality might help those working in the bottom left quadrant of this employment model (working in a toxic environment with work that is not aligned to their skills) feel less alienated from work, self, and others. Further research is required to explore if workplace spirituality increases empowerment or improves the leadership of people working in the upper right quadrant (working in a job aligned to their skills and in a great work environment).

### **Other Employment Models**

This employment model consists of four distinct employment contexts which might have unique spiritual needs (figure 16):

1. Those working in jobs that are effectively using their skills, strengths, and passions while working in a positive (healthy) work environment.
2. Those working in jobs that are not effectively using their skills, strengths, and passions while working in a positive (healthy) work environment.
3. Those working in jobs that are effectively using their skills, strengths, and passions while working in a negative (toxic) work environment.
4. Those working in jobs that are not effectively using their skills, strengths, and passions while working in a negative (toxic) work environment.

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20. Mitroff and Denton, "A Study of Spirituality in the Workplace," 87.

Work Environment	Underemployment		Meaningful	
Positive (Healthy)				
Somewhat Positive				
	Destructive/Corrosive		Draining	
Somewhat Negative				
Negative (Toxic)				
Use of Skills, Strengths, Passions	Not at All Effective	Not So Effective	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective

**Figure 16. Proposed employment model for contextualizing workplace discipleship**

### **A Three-Context Model**

Gallup's research suggests three employment contexts (figure 17):

1. Those working in jobs that are effectively using their skills, strengths, and passions while working in a positive (healthy) work environment.
2. Those working in jobs that are not effectively using their skills, strengths, and passions while working in a negative (toxic) work environment.
3. Everybody else.

Essentially, Gallup's research combines people who are underemployed while working in healthy work environments with people who are using their skills in their work but working in unhealthy environments.

Work Environment				
Positive (Healthy)				Engaged
Somewhat Positive	Disengaged			
Somewhat Negative				
Negative (Toxic)	Actively Disengaged			
Use of Skills, Strengths, Passions				
	Not at all Effective (%)	Not So Effective (%)	Somewhat Effective (%)	Very Effective (%)

**Figure 17. Gallup’s model on employee engagement.**

Gallup’s research primarily focuses on employee engagement. According to Gallup, people who are ‘engaged at work’ are those who feel that their skills are very effectively used in their jobs and work in a positive work environment, in other words, they are working in the upper right quadrant of this employment model.<sup>21</sup> Gallup’s research indicates that one in three employees in America and approximately one in six (15 percent) employees globally are engaged at work.<sup>22,23</sup>

Gallup’s research suggests that one in six (16 percent) of Americans are miserable in their workplaces or actively disengaged. These would be people in the bottom left quadrant of this employment model. Gallup’s research combines the upper left quadrant and the lower right

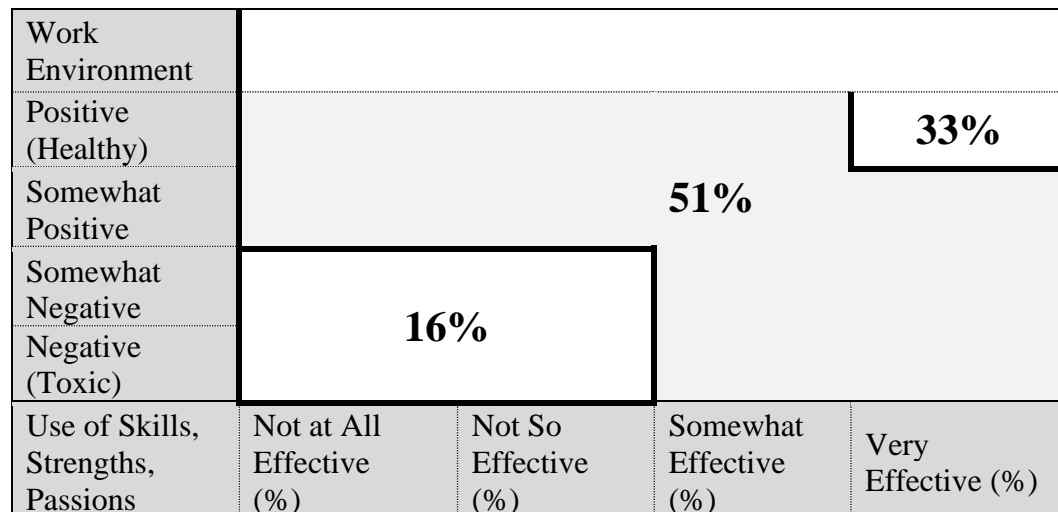
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21. Gallup, “State of the American Workplace,” 2017, <https://cloc.umd.edu/library/research/State%20of%20the%20American%20Workplace%202017.pdf>.

22. Gallup, “State of the American Workplace.”

23. Gallup, “The World’s Broken Workplace.” June 13, 2017, <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/chairman/212045/world-broken-workplace.aspx>.

quadrant into one category, which they classify as ‘unengaged’. According to Gallup’s research, one in two people (51 percent) are disengaged (figure 18).<sup>24</sup>



**Figure 18. Gallup’s research on employee engagement.** According to Gallup, 33 percent of employees are in the upper right quadrant, 16 percent are in the lower left quadrant, and the remaining 51 percent are in the upper left or lower right quadrant. Source: Gallup, “State of the American Workplace.”

From the individual’s perspective, Rath in *Strength Finders* suggests that people who are not working on the far-right side of this employment model dread going to work, have more negative than positive interactions with their colleagues, treat their customers poorly, tell their friends what a miserable company they work for, achieve less daily, and have fewer positive and creative moments.<sup>25, 26</sup>

For the vocational disciple maker who wishes to contextualize their teaching or preaching, these statistics suggest that one in three people in a typical congregation may be

24. Gallup, “State of the American Workplace.”

25. Tom Rath, *Strength Finders 2.0* (Gallup Press, 2015, Kindle Edition), Kindle Location 235 or 2083.

26. Using this employment model, researchers could break down their research into two dimensions assessing both the impact of the health of a work environment and job fit to people’s behavior in their workplaces.

engaged at work or enjoying their work. One in six people may be miserable in their work or disengaged, and every second person is unengaged at work. Another way to look at this would be that Rath's work suggests that seven in ten people are finding only partial to no enjoyment in their work. Using this employment model with four quadrants to describe employment contexts provides the vocational disciple maker with more granular information for understanding how people feel about their work.

For the fifty-one percent of people Gallup identifies as disengaged, this employment model may provide researchers with the opportunity to analyze the economic impact of skill alignment and work environment independently. From a corporate perspective, Gallup's research estimates that actively disengaged employees cost the US economy between \$483 billion and \$604 billion each year in lost productivity.<sup>27</sup> Gallup's research also suggests that actively disengaged employees cost their organization 34 percent of their salaries.<sup>28</sup> According to Gallup, a company with an average of 9.3 engaged employees for every actively disengaged employee in 2010–2011 experienced 147 percent higher earnings per share compared with their competition in 2011–2012.<sup>29</sup> This employment model could be used to compare the economic impact of employees who work in positive work environments but whose skills are not effectively utilized versus employees who work in toxic environments but whose skills are effectively utilized.

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27. Gallup, "State of the American Workplace.

28. Paul Petrone, "How to Calculate the Cost of Employee Disengagement" *LinkedIn* (blog) (March 24, 2017), <https://learning.linkedin.com/blog/engaging-your-workforce/how-to-calculate-the-cost-of-employee-disengagement>.

29. Susan Sorenson, "How Employee Engagement Drives Growth," *Gallup Business Journal* (June 20, 2013): <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/236927/employee-engagement-drives-growth.aspx>.



From a Christian perspective, an alternative research project would be to explore how God's grace enables businesses to flourish and contribute economically even though not all their employees are working in the upper right quadrant. This research could be extended further to evaluate the economic impact of Christians who are fully engaged in their work, while not working in the upper right quadrant.

### **A Two Context Model—Underemployment**

Much of the research into underemployment focuses on the horizontal dimension of this employment model and does not take into consideration work environments.

Friedland suggests that people might be underemployed by hours worked (e.g., involuntarily working less than full time), by income (e.g., unable to earn a livable wage even if they worked full time), by skills (e.g., their jobs do not allow them to put their skills and training to use), or by status (e.g., their jobs provide less occupational status than expected based on their background).<sup>30</sup>

Salopek describes how “The industrial and technological ages have done much to alter the workplace. Not the least of their influence has been the virtual extinction of the artist-craftsperson, who valued the process of [the] work as much (if not more than) the product. The experience of doing the work was as important as the result of the work itself. Now the artist-worker has become an employee in a job just for the purpose of achieving and survival. The linear ladder of success . . . is the operable image, and spirit and soul are lost in the course of the

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30. Daniel Friedland. and Richard H. Price. “Underemployment: Consequences for the Health and Well-being of Workers,” *American Journal of Community Psychology* 32, no. 1 (09, 2003): 33–45.

doing.”<sup>31</sup> This would suggest that artistic/craft persons might find themselves on the left side of this model. A Pew research report suggests that dissenting voices believe that anything involving creativity, or the arts will remain important.<sup>32</sup>

For the person who disciples artistic/craft persons, it might be important to help them see how they are expressing the creativity God has blessed them with work that, at first glance, does not involve creativity.

In the twenty-first century, significant growth of knowledge-based work has occurred. This work favors strong nonroutine cognitive skills, such as abstract reasoning, problem solving, communication, and collaboration.<sup>33</sup> McKinsey’s research suggests that the need for advanced information technology jobs with higher cognitive, social, and emotional skills will accelerate while the need for basic cognitive skills and physical and manual skills will decline.<sup>34</sup> McKinsey anticipates a shift to lifelong learning, networks of teams, faster decision cycles, and an unbundling and rebundling of tasks to raise corporate efficiency.

As organizations adopt new technologies, some highly skilled employees will find that jobs which at one time were aligned to their skills are no longer aligned. Other employees who never felt their jobs were aligned to their skills will also feel a shift in how they perceive their

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31. Jennifer Salopek, “For God and Company,” *Training and Development* 54, 3 (Mar 2000): 77.

32. Aaron Smith and Janna Anderson, “AI Robotics, and the Future of Jobs,” Pew Research Center (August 6, 2014): 39.

33. Lynn A. Karoly and Panis Constantijn, *21 Century at Work: Forces Shaping the Future Workplace and Workplace in the United States* (Rand Corporation, 2004), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/dtl/detail.action?docID=197471>, 13.

34. Jacques Bughin, et al. “Skill shift: Automation and the future of the workforce Discussion Paper.” *McKinsey and Company*, May 3, 2018 <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/skill-shift-automation-and-the-future-of-the-workforce>; see also <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/Future%20of%20Organizations/Skill%20shift%20Automation%20and%20the%20future%20of%20the%20workforce/MGI-Skill-Shift-Automation-and-future-of-the-workforce-May-2018.pdf>.

job-skills alignment. This shifting between the left side and the right side of this employment model creates an opportunity for the vocational disciple maker to discuss the stability and unchanging nature of God's relationship with his children. People who find themselves permanently shifted from the right side to the left side of this model (i.e., from work that effectively utilizes their skills, strengths and passions to a role that uses these ineffectively) could become a new constituency of financially (unemployed) or intellectually (underemployed) 'poor and needy' individuals.<sup>35</sup> Vocational disciple makers will have to discern how to address the needs of this new constituency.

McKee-Ryan suggests that re-employed workers tend to find jobs of a lower quality than those they lost, putting many unemployed individuals at risk of being underemployed.<sup>36</sup> McKee-Ryan suggests that most people do not return to a state of equilibrium until they are re-employed in high-quality jobs that are similar to the ones they lost. They suggest that workers in unsatisfactory new jobs continue to cope with their job loss as though they are still unemployed.

According to Friedland, the literature suggests that skill underemployment affects the health and well-being of workers.<sup>37</sup> Workers who experience skill underemployment approximately two years after they leave high school report more depressive symptoms, lower life satisfaction, more external control orientation, and lower perceived competence than do their adequately employed peers. Friedland suggests that this is due to larger increases in self-esteem

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35. Smith and Anderson, *AI Robotics, and the Future of Jobs*, 4.

36. Frances McKee-Ryan and Jaron Harvey "I Have a Job, but . . .": A Review of Underemployment," *Journal of Management* 37 (4) (2011): 962–96.

37. Daniel Friedland and Richard H. Price, "Underemployment: Consequences for the Health and Well-being of Workers," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 32, no. 1 (09, 2003): 33–45.

among adequately employed workers rather than decreases in self-esteem among underemployed workers.

This might suggest that the vocational disciple maker may want to be aware of the self-esteem and other issues associated with both people who are unemployed and those who are underemployed and working for survival. Vocational disciple makers may want to consider how economic boom-bust cycles and the changing nature of work are impacting the number of underemployed and unemployed people they minister to.

### **A Two Context Model—Toxic Work Environments.**

Generally, research into toxic work environments focuses on the vertical dimension of this employment model and does not take into consideration job fit.

Work environments, or the vertical dimension of this employment model, are defined by the relationships and places where people work. Work environments defined by the lower half of this employment model are negative or toxic work environments. Examples of negative work environments include disrespectful behavior, constant control, harassment, verbal abuse, mockery, nicknaming, dissemination of false rumors, humiliation of the person, rude communication, interruption while speaking, and gossip.<sup>38</sup> The politics of an organization, competition, and unclear work duties can also contribute to psychological harassment. Another contributor to the emergence of psychological harassment at work is management styles that do not provide support, clarity in instructions or feedback, and authoritarian styles or intimidation.<sup>39</sup>

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38. Jolanta Sondaitė, and Gailė Vinciūnaitė. “Experience of workplace psychological harassment.” *International Journal of Psychology*, 2017/20, 95.

39. Sondaitė and Vinciūnaitė. “Experience of workplace psychological harassment,” 86.

Cavaiola and Stout identify other subtle types of negative work experiences, including being required to work longer hours or being “on call” for extended hours, more job-related duties due to layoffs and downsizing, and jobs being lost to contracting and outsourcing.<sup>40</sup> Giorgi postulates that employee well-being is adversely affected to the extent that employees face high job demands without the resources to successfully meet these demands or to buffer them from the energy- and resource-depleting aspects of their work.<sup>41</sup>

Most researchers define negative or toxic work environments as places where workplace bullying occurs. Sondaitė and Vinciūnaitė define workplace bullying as repetitive and lasting nonphysical persecution or harassment at work which has a humiliating effect on the victim.<sup>42</sup> Nielsen’s research estimates about 15 percent of employees on a global basis are exposed to some level of workplace bullying.<sup>43</sup> Namie’s research from 2017 shows that one in five (19 percent) Americans have experienced bullying and another one in five (19 percent) have witnessed bullying in their workplace.<sup>44</sup> This would suggest that two in five people that a vocational disciple maker ministers to either have experienced or witnessed a toxic work environment.

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40. Alan A. Cavaiola and David Stout, “Other Facets of Workplace Abuse: An Exploratory Study,” *The Psychologist-Manager Journal* 20, no. 4 11 (2017): 246–66.

41. Gabriele Giorgi, Mindy K. Shoss, and Jose Leon-Perez, “Going Beyond Workplace Stressors: Economic Crisis and Perceived Employability in Relation to Psychological Distress and Job Dissatisfaction,” *International Journal of Stress Management* 22, no. 2 (05, 2015): 137–58.

42. Sondaitė and Vinciūnaitė, “Experience of workplace psychological harassment,” 84.

43. Matthiesen Nielsen and S. Einarsen, “The impact of methodological moderators on prevalence rates of workplace bullying. A meta-analysis,” *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 83 (2010): 955–79.

44. Gary Namie, U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey, Workplace Bullying Institute (2017).

Katnor and Streitfeld, in their description of the Amazon work environment, provide an example of a contemporary negative or toxic work environment.

At Amazon, workers are encouraged to tear apart one another's ideas in meetings, toil long and late (emails arrive past midnight, followed by text messages asking why they were not answered), and held to standards the company boasts are "unreasonably high". The internal phone directory instructs colleagues on how to send secret feedback to one another's bosses. Employees say it is frequently used to sabotage others. (The tool offers sample texts, including this: "I felt concerned about his inflexibility and openly complaining about minor tasks.")

Many of the newcomers filing in on Mondays may not be there in a few years. The company's winners dream up innovations that they roll out to a quarter-billion customers and accrue small fortunes in soaring stock. Losers leave or are fired in annual culling's of the staff—"purposeful Darwinism," one former Amazon human resources director said. Some workers who suffered from cancer, miscarriages and other personal crises said they had been evaluated unfairly or edged out rather than given time to recover.<sup>45</sup>

For some of these Amazon employees, they found themselves working in jobs that are aligned to their skills, or at the bottom right quadrant, while others found themselves working in the bottom left quadrant. This employment model would allow researchers to examine if there are mitigating influences of high skill alignment to the toxicity of negative work environments.

Employees working in negative work environments might physically experience a lack of sleep, lack of energy, lack of concentration, memory loss, self-doubt, decreasing self-esteem, loss of orientation, despair, increased sensitivity, depression, unnecessary guilt, and lack of self-confidence.<sup>46</sup> Psychologically, they might feel despair, guilt, anger, helplessness, anxiety, lust for revenge, rage, or loneliness.<sup>47</sup>

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45. Jodi Katnor and David Streitfeld, "Amazon's bruising, thrilling workplace," *Today Online* (15 August 2015), <https://www.todayonline.com/tech/amazons-bruising-thrilling-workplace>.

46. Sondaitė and Vinciūnaitė, "Experience of workplace psychological harassment," 88, 95.

47. Sondaitė and Vinciūnaitė, "Experience of workplace psychological harassment," 88, 96.

One issue vocational disciple makers need to address when discipling people who are in the lower half of this employment model one is the social justice issues of toxic work environments. Another issue to be addressed is the sufficiency of God to meet the needs of these people, while also helping people wrestle with the sovereignty of God and their questions. People working in the lower half of this model may be tempted to desire to find a healthier work environment. The vocational disciple maker has an opportunity to come alongside these people and help them discern God's will for their lives.

Morneau Shepell's research found that 70 percent of employees reported that their work experience impacted their mental health.<sup>48</sup> A study by Employment and Social Development Canada found that one in two, or 47 percent, of working Canadians consider their work to be the most stressful part of daily life (figure 20).<sup>49</sup>

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48. Bill Howatt, et al., "Understanding mental health, mental illness and their impacts in the workplace," Mental Health Commission of Canada (Morneau Shepell, 2017), 15.  
<https://www.morneaushepell.com/permafiles/91412/understanding-mental-health-mental-illness-and-their-impacts-workplace.pdf>.

49. Sarah Wang and Eva Karpinski, "Psychological Health in the Workplace" (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2016), 1.



**Figure 20. Percentage of people impacted by toxic work environments.**

Sprigg’s research shows that the effects of bullying are dependent upon a range of characteristics, including an individual’s disposition, resilience, coping behaviors, and social support.<sup>50</sup> Further research needs to collect contemporary stories of how Christians cope in negative and toxic environments, similar to the stories of Corrie ten Boom, Daniel, and Hagar.

For the vocational disciple maker, this employment model could be used to assess the impact work environment has on the lives and mental health of the people they are ministering to, particularly those working in either the bottom left or the bottom right quadrant of this employment model.

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50. Christine Sprigg, Karen Niven, Jeremy Dawson, Samuel Farley, and Christopher J. Armitage, “Witnessing Workplace Bullying and Employee Well-being: A Two-Wave Field Study,” *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 24, no. 2 (04, 2019): 288.



Vocational disciple makers might wish to be cognizant that people who are not directly affected by toxic work environments might also be impacted indirectly by witnessing negative workplace behaviors. Research highlights that people who witness negativity in a work environment are also affected by the negativity. Sprigg suggests that witnesses of workplace bullying first appraise the event they have witnessed as to whether it poses a threat to them, and then they assess whether they are able to deal with what they have witnessed.<sup>51</sup> According to Sprigg, when people observe others in their organization being treated negatively, they take this as an indication as to how they might be treated in the future. The power imbalance implicit in the bullying process could also lead witnesses to feel more threatened than they would when viewing a conflict between two parties of equal standing because high-powered individuals can influence the opinions and behaviors of others in the workgroup.<sup>52</sup> This presents an opportunity for vocational disciple makers to equip witnesses to workplace bullying with the wisdom and discernment to become reconciling presences in their workplaces to mitigate the social, psychological, and physical fallout of the negativity they may witness.

As Gary Thomas states in his book *When to Walk Away*, those who work with toxic, hard-hearted people are dealing with people who, absent a supernatural touch from God, will hate any light that a Christian radiates, no matter how gently, patiently, or gracefully they share it.<sup>53</sup> Toxic people do not want their evil to be challenged or exposed. The problem is not the light—the light is perfect, holy, and good. Rather, the problem is that toxic people hate the light.

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51. Sprigg, Niven, Dawson, Farley, and Armitage, “Witnessing Workplace Bullying and Employee Well-being,” 286.

52. Sprigg, Niven, Dawson, Farley, and Armitage, “Witnessing Workplace Bullying and Employee Well-being,” 287.

53. Gary Thomas, *When to Walk Away*, (Grand Rapids: MI, Zondervan, 2019), 82.

Thomas asks the question, “What if the way and work of Christ are so compelling, so urgent, and so important that allowing people to become bogged down by toxic people is an offense to God rather than a service to God?”<sup>54</sup> Vocational disciple makers have the privilege to help people in toxic work environments seek what John Climacus called true meekness “a permanent condition of that soul which remains unaffected by whether or not it is spoken well of, whether or not it is honored or praised”.<sup>55</sup>

As can be demonstrated from the literature, employment contexts are complex and nuanced. This employment model reduces this complexity helping vocational disciple makers understand how both the environment where people work, and how their work itself impacts them emotionally and spiritually. When a vocational disciple maker understands the context of the people they are discipling, they may be better equipped to help people fulfill the mission God has called them to regardless of their employment context.

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54. Thomas, *When to Walk Away*, 13.

55. Thomas, *When to Walk Away*, 100–101.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH RESULTS

To test the efficacy of this employment model to describe employees' different employment contexts and their associated feelings and attitudes, I used a survey combining quantitative and qualitative inquiry. The survey consisted of ten questions. The quantitative inquiry addressed how people self-identified their current employment contexts and their previous employment contexts. The qualitative inquiry covered people's feelings and attitudes toward their current and previous employment contexts as well as their feelings and attitudes after they transitioned to their current employment contexts. The survey included basic demographic questions as well. The survey was intended to test an indicative group of respondents who self-identified as Christians working in established work environments.

Respondents were asked about their previous and current employment contexts to explore how their employment context changed in their new job. A qualitative inquiry of people's feelings and attitudes toward their current and previous employment contexts were asked to include a richer breadth of anecdotes for each quadrant in this employment model. The survey questions are included in Appendix E. The responses to the quantitative questions are included in Appendix F. Respondents comments are included in Appendix G.

Participants in this survey primarily live in Calgary, Alberta, and self-identified as Christians. The purpose of this study was not to define how they perceived the word *Christian*.

The survey was sent to 256 people who subscribed to receive my daily devotional related to faith in the workplace (Appendix D). Of those, eighty-nine people completed the survey. Sixty-six (74 percent) were over forty-four. Most of these individuals work in white collar jobs, primarily in the oil and gas sector, since this is the largest corporate employment sector in

Calgary. Many of these individuals have a traditional employer-employee working relationship. Some individuals are contractors. None of the respondents, that I am aware of, work in the gig economy or the retail, police, fire, or health care sectors. Thirty percent of these individuals have checked out one of the workplace faith communities in Calgary while 20 percent semi-regularly participate in one of these faith communities.

To expand the demographics, the survey was also sent to several young-adult church small group leaders in Calgary. This generated an additional sixteen responses for a total of 105 respondents. From conversations with the small group leaders, most of these respondents also had a traditional employer-employee relationship in the oil and gas sector. With these additional responses, 63 percent of the respondents were over forty-four and 37 percent were under forty-five (table 1). Of the respondents, 59 percent were male, and 39 percent were female (table 2).

**Table 1. Age demographic of respondents.**

	< 18	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
Percent (%)	0	7	10	20	27	29	7

Note: Approximately 17 percent of the respondents were under thirty-five years old and 63 percent were over 45.

**Table 2. Gender demographics of respondents.**

	Female	Male	Other
Percent (%)	39	59	2

Note: Approximately 39 percent of the respondents were female, and 59 percent were male.

### **Observations—Contextualization**

To understand how the respondents viewed contextualizing the gospel to their work, they were asked, “How useful would teaching on biblical truths that relate to the issues you experience at your work be?” Of the respondents, 74 percent felt this would be very useful or

extremely useful; 26 percent felt this would be somewhat useful (table 3). None of the respondents felt that contextualized teaching would not be useful. This is consistent with Ecklund’s research.<sup>1</sup>

This suggests that people are looking for wisdom on contextualizing faith in God with their work experiences and corroborates the secondary hypothesis of the thesis-project that an employment model would help vocational disciple makers understand the workplace context of the people they are discipling.

**Table 3. Interest in contextualized discipleship.**

	Not at all useful	Not so useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful	Extremely useful
Percent (%)	0	0	26	33	41

Note: Approximately 74 percent of the respondents indicated biblical teaching related to their employment context would be very useful, while 26 percent indicated this would be somewhat useful.

### **Observations—Years in Role**

Respondents were asked how many years they had been in their current role. About half (48 percent) of the respondents had been in their current roles for less than three years. About a third (38 percent) had been in their previous role for less than three years. Half of the respondents who have been less than three years in their current roles had also been less than three years in their previous roles. Approximately a quarter of the respondents had changed jobs twice in the last three years (table 4).

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1. Elaine Howard Ecklund, Denise Daniels and Rachel Schneider, “From Secular to Sacred: Bringing Work to Church”, *Religions* 2020, 121, 442; doi:10.3390/rel11090442, www.mdpi.com/journal/religions, August 2020.

According to the Holmes and Rahe stress scale, a job change weighs 36 out of 100 in terms of stress in a person's life.<sup>2</sup> In a stable, positive life, this would not be significant. However, if people have also moved to a new house, or their partner is ill, or money or marital problems are an issue, the added stress of a job change could impact how they cope with life.

**Table 4. Years in the role.**

	< 1 Year (%)	1–3 Years (%)	3–5 Years (%)	5–10 years (%)	10+ Years (%)
Current Role	23	25	8	20	24
Previous Role	11	27	16	31	15

Note: Forty-eight percent of respondents were in their current roles for less than three years. Thirty-eight percent of respondents were in their previous roles for less than three years.

### **Quantitative Results —Vertical Dimension**

The vertical axis of this employment model represents a continuum from a negative (toxic) work environment to a positive (healthy) work environment. To establish where respondents fell on the vertical dimension of this employment model, respondents were asked, “Thinking about your current position, overall, do you feel positively or negatively about your work environment?” There were four possible responses—negatively, somewhat negatively, somewhat positively, and positively. Respondents who answered positively or somewhat positively fall on the upper half of this employment model while those who answered somewhat negatively or negatively fall on the lower half of this employment model.

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2. Thomas H. Holmes and Richard H. Rahe “The Social Readjustment Rating Scale”, *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, Volume 11, Issue 2, (August 1967): 213–18.

In their current positions, 60 percent of the respondents reported that they felt positive about their work environments, while 30 percent felt somewhat positive about their work environments. Eleven percent reported somewhat negative or negative about their current work environments. It is interesting to observe that 21 percent more of the respondents shifted from perceiving their work environment as somewhat negative or negative to perceiving their work environment as positive (table 5). Namie’s research found that 19 percent of employees in America witness bullying in their workplace.<sup>3</sup> What is interesting to observe is that these statistics are 10 percent higher than Namie’s for the previous position and 10 percent lower for the current position. This shift from negative to positive work environments is consistent with people’s desire to seek healthy work environments.

**Table 5. Work environment.**

	<b>Current Position</b>	<b>Previous Position</b>
Positive (Healthy)	60%	38%
Somewhat Positive	30%	31%
Somewhat Negative	10%	21%
Negative (Toxic)	1%	10%

Note: Ninety percent of the respondents identified that they felt somewhat positively or positively about their current work environment while 69 percent felt positively or somewhat positively about their previous work environments.

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3. Gary Namie, U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey, Workplace Bullying Institute (2017).

It is noteworthy that these respondents who would self-identify as Christians are not exempt from encountering negative or borderline abusive work environments.<sup>4</sup>

### **Quantitative Results—Horizontal Dimension**

The horizontal axis of this employment model represents a continuum of ineffective to very effective utilization of a person's skills, strengths, and passions in their jobs. To establish where respondents fell on the horizontal dimension of this employment model, respondents were asked, "Thinking about your current position, how effectively do you feel your skills, passions, or strengths are put to good use?" There were four possible responses—negatively, somewhat negatively, somewhat positively, and positively. Respondents who answered positively or somewhat positively fall on the right half of this employment model while those who answered somewhat negatively or negatively fall on the left half of this employment model.

In their current positions, 44 percent of the respondents reported that their skills were very effectively put to good use and 43 percent reported their skills were somewhat effectively put to good use. Fifteen percent reported that their skills were not so effectively or not effectively put to good use. Interestingly, in their previous positions, 23 percent of the respondents felt their skills were not as effectively used as they are in their current positions (table 6).

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4. Monika Gul, "Vancouver coffee shop chain owner accused of creating borderline abusive work environment," *City News 1130* (July 9, 2020), <https://www.citynews1130.com/2020/07/09/vancouver-coffee-shop-co-owner-toxic-work/>.



**Table 6. Skill alignment.**

Current Position	1%	14%	43%	44%
Previous Position	3%	20%	43%	34%
Use of Skills, Strengths, Passions—Current Role	Not at all Effective	Not so Effective	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective

Note: Eighty-seven percent of the respondents identified that their skills were used somewhat or very effectively in their current positions compared with 77 percent for their previous positions.

This data is consistent to Statistics Canada research that found while underemployment is significant, only 13 percent of overqualified university graduates were not satisfied with their jobs in 2012.<sup>5</sup>

### **Observations—Populating This Employment Model**

Combining this data reveals that just over a third (37 percent) of the respondents perceived that they are currently performing meaningful work or working in a job where their skills are very effectively used in a positive work environment. A little under half (46 percent) felt they were doing somewhat meaningful work in their current jobs. These are people who

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5. LaRochelle-Cote Sebastian “Overqualification, skills and job satisfaction”. Statistics Canada: Insights on Canadian Society: September 14, 2016. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2016001/article/14655-eng.htm> accessed on 2020-05-30.

The Canadian Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer<sup>5</sup> found that in 2014, about 56 percent of recent university graduates aged twenty-four or younger were overqualified; and roughly 65 percent were either overqualified or unemployed. Among university graduates aged twenty-five to thirty-four, about 40 percent were overqualified. The most popular reasons provided for their current jobs differing from their intended occupations were: 1) they could not find jobs they wanted, and 2) they could not wait for jobs they wanted. — Helen Lao and Tim Scholz, “Labor Market Assessment 2015” (Ottawa, Canada: Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 12 November 2015), [https://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/Reports/2015/Labour%202015/Labour\\_Market\\_Assessment\\_2015\\_EN.pdf](https://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/Reports/2015/Labour%202015/Labour_Market_Assessment_2015_EN.pdf).

either are working in a job that very effectively or somewhat effectively uses their skills and work in a somewhat positive work environment or are working in a positive work environment but their jobs only somewhat effectively use their skills. I drew this distinction between meaningful and somewhat meaningful work because of the way Gallup classifies meaningful work.

Approximately one in twelve (8 percent) perceive that they are currently underemployed. Seven percent of respondents felt that they were in a destructive or corrosive environment (bottom left quadrant) in their current jobs. Four percent perceived that they currently worked in a draining work environment (bottom right quadrant) (table 7).

**Table 7. Current position.**

Work Environment	Underemployment		Meaningful	
Positive (Healthy)	0	2%	21%	37%
Somewhat Positive	0	6%	18%	7%
	Destructive / Corrosive		Draining	
Somewhat Negative	0	6%	4%	0
Negative (Toxic)	1%	0	0	0
Use of Skills, Strengths, Passions—Current Role	Not at all effective (%)	Not so effective (%)	Somewhat effective (%)	Very effective (%)

Note: Thirty-five percent perceive that they are employed in meaningful work. (Numbers do not add to 100 because of rounding).

Another way of examining these statistics is that just over a third (37 percent) of the respondents are what Gallup calls “engaged at work”.<sup>6</sup> These are people who feel that their skills are being very effectively utilized in their jobs and are working in positive work environments. They love their jobs and make their organization better every day. While seven percent are actively disengaged—they are miserable in the workplace. The other half (55 percent) are not engaged; they are just there.

These statistics are consistent with Gallup’s research which indicated 33 percent of employees in America are engaged, 16 percent are actively disengaged, and 51 percent are not engaged.<sup>7</sup> According to Gallup, globally only 15 percent of the world’s one billion full-time workers are engaged at work.<sup>8</sup>

What is interesting to observe is that almost half of people who perceive that their current job does not effectively utilize their skills, interests or passions describe their work environment as negative. Combining job fit and work environment into a single model provides an opportunity to investigate both the effect of job fit on toxic environments and the effect of healthy work environments on underemployment. Further research is needed to understand how this model might add to the understanding of underemployment.

What is interesting to observe is that none of the respondents felt that their skills, strengths, or passions were effectively used in work environments that they perceived to be somewhat negative or negative. It is also interesting to observe that approximately half the

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6. Gallup, “State of the American Workplace,” 2017, <https://cloc.umd.edu/library/research/State%20of%20the%20American%20Workplace%202017.pdf>.

7. Gallup, “State of the American Workplace.”

8. Gallup, “The World’s Broken Workplace,” <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/chairman/212045/world-broken-workplace.aspx>.

respondents felt their skills were somewhat effectively used in a negative work environment. Further research is needed to understand how this model might add to the understanding of negative work environments.

### **Observations—Gender Differences**

There is a discrepancy of 11 percent between the men (41 percent) and women (30 percent) who reported being engaged in meaningful work or work in the top right corner of the upper right quadrant. Further analysis shows that 11 percent more men perceived that their skills were effectively used in their jobs as compared with women, while 6 percent more women perceived their work environments negatively (table 8). Looking at these statistics through Gallup's lens, one observes that more men are 'engaged at work' than women. This might need to be further tested. However, it is not the objective of this thesis-project to analyze this.

**Table 8. Gender differences.**

Work Environment	Underemployment		Meaningful	
Positive (Healthy)	0 (M) 0 (F)	0 (M) 5% (F)	20 % (M) 21% (F)	41% (M) 30% (F)
Somewhat Positive	0 (M) 0 (M)	5% (M) 7% (F)	21 % (M) 14% (F)	5% (M) 9% (F)
	Destructive/Corrosive		Draining	
Somewhat Negative	0 (M) 0 (F)	5% (M) 7% (F)	3% (M) 5% (F)	0 (M) 0 (F)
Negative (Toxic)	0 (M) 2% (F)	0 (M) 0 (F)	0 (M) 0 (F)	0 (M) 0 (F)
Use of Skills, Strengths, Passions—Current Role	Not at all effective (%)	Not so effective (%)	Somewhat effective (%)	Very effective (%)

Note: More men than women perceive their work environment as healthy.

### Observations—Age Differences

The results show an age bias. Only 17 percent of respondents under the age of thirty-five perceived that they worked in jobs that very effectively used their skills in a positive work environment. Whereas 52 percent of those between the ages of forty-five and fifty-four, and 41 percent of those over fifty-five perceived that they were performing meaningful work. The primary difference appears to be that the younger generation feels as if their jobs only somewhat effectively utilize their skills (39 percent) as opposed to older generations (10–13 percent) (table 9).

Further research is needed to explore why the younger generation does not perceive that their skills are being effectively utilized in their jobs. Some of this might be explained by the changing nature of work and the types of jobs the younger generation is employed in.

**Table 9. Age discrepancies.**

Work Environment	Underemployment		Meaningful	
Positive (Healthy)	0 (<35)	6% (<35)	39% (<35)	17% (<35)
	0 (35–44)	5% (35–44)	28% (35–44)	29% (35–44)
	0 (45–54)	0 (45–54)	10% (45–54)	52% (45–54)
	0 (55–99)	0 (55–99)	13% (55–99)	41% (55–99)
Somewhat Positive	0 (<35)	11% (<35)	11% (<35)	0 (<35)
	0 (35–44)	0 (35–44)	14% (35–44)	14% (35–44)
	0 (45–54)	4% (45–54)	28% (45–54)	3% (45–54)
	0 (55–99)	8% (55–99)	16% (55–99)	8% (55–99)
	Destructive / Corrosive		Draining	
Somewhat Negative	0 (<35)	11% (<35)	5% (<35)	0 (<35)
	0 (35–44)	5 (35–44)	5% (35–44)	0 (35–44)
	0 (45–54)	0 (45–54)	3% (45–54)	0 (45–54)
	0 (55–99)	8% (55–99)	3% (55–99)	0 (55–99)
Negative (Toxic)	0 (<35)	0 (<35)	0 (<35)	0 (<35)
	0 (35–44)	0 (35–44)	0 (35–44)	0 (35–44)
	0 (45–54)	0 (45–54)	0 (45–54)	0 (45–54)
	3% (55–99)	0 (55–99)	0 (55–99)	0 (55–99)
Use of Skills, Strengths, Passions—Current Role	Not at all effective (%)	Not so effective (%)	Somewhat effective (%)	Very effective (%)

Note: Fewer people in the younger generation perceive that their jobs very effectively utilize their skills (17 percent vs. 52 percent for those aged forty-five to fifty-four). Rather, the younger generation perceives that their work somewhat effectively utilizes their skills (39 percent vs. 10 percent for those aged forty-five to fifty-four).

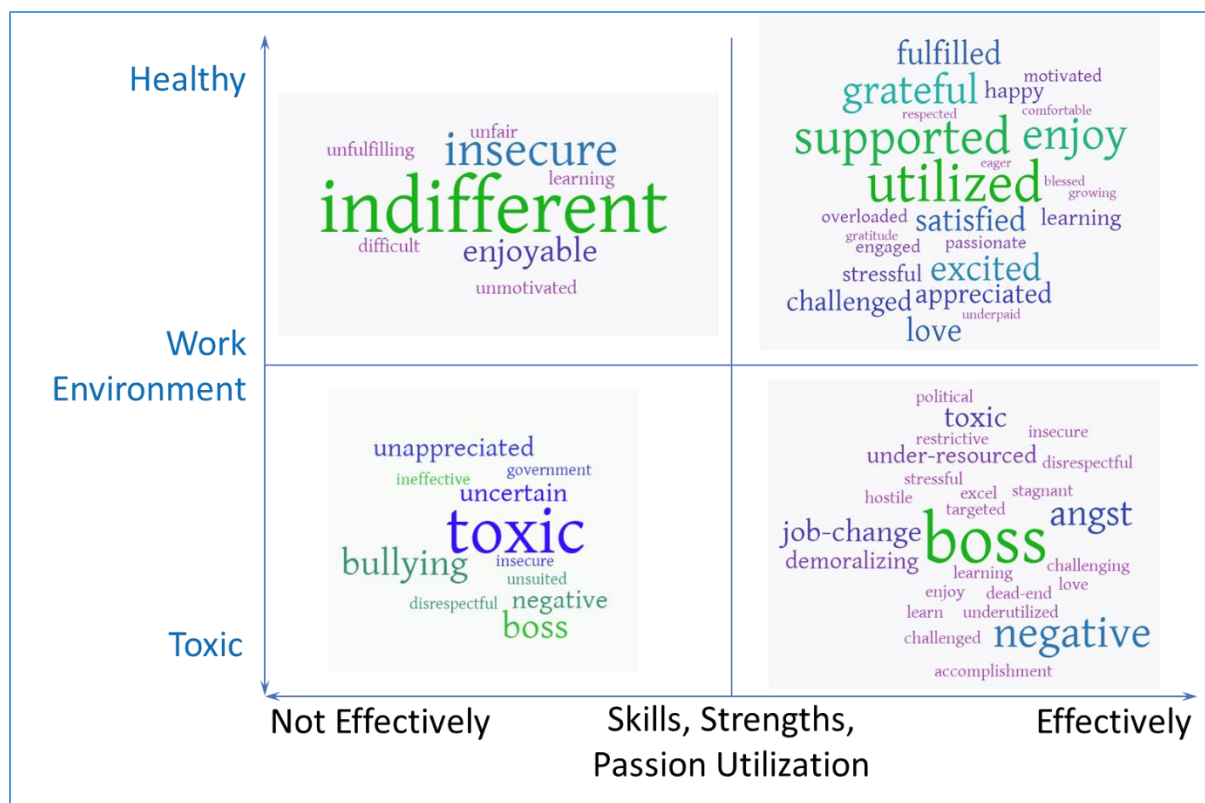
### Qualitative Results

As part of this survey, people were asked to describe their feelings and attitudes toward their work environments and their current positions. These responses provide human behavioral insights into this thesis-project, which assist understanding respondents' feelings and attitudes towards their employment.

It was notable that respondents were keen to comment on their feelings and attitudes. I had anticipated that most of the respondents would respond with one or two words or short

phrases. To my surprise, over half of those who left comments wrote sentences of twenty words or more. This may indicate that people are interested in sharing stories about their work environments and current positions. When we listen to people's stories, we validate for them the reality of their work experiences.

Respondents were asked to describe their feelings and attitudes towards their current and previous positions as it related to the effective use of their skills. Respondents were also asked to describe their feelings and attitudes towards their current and previous work environments. I received a total of 225 comments from fifty-seven respondents, or approximately half (54 percent) of the respondents who took the survey. I categorized each respondent into one of the four quadrants for both their current and previous positions. For each quadrant, I grouped the comments from the previous position and the current position. Respondents who identified that their skills were very effectively utilized, and they worked in a positive work environment, were classified as working in the upper right quadrant. Respondents who identified that their skills were very effectively or somewhat effectively utilized working in a somewhat negative or negative environment were classified as working in the lower right quadrant. Respondents who identified that their skills were not so effectively or not at all effectively utilized in a positive or somewhat positive environment were classified in the upper left quadrant. Respondents who identified that their skills were not so effectively or not at all effectively utilized in a somewhat negative or negative environment were classified in the bottom left quadrant. I then coded each of the comments with a word or group of words to capture the sentiments of the comment. I then generated a word cloud representing these comments (figure 21) to visually summarize the responses from the 105 respondents. Respondents' comments and the coding of their comments are included in Appendix G, "Respondents' Comments".



**Figure 21. Summary of qualitative analysis.**

While it is useful for communication purposes to codify people's stories; these stories describe how people perceive their workplaces. They are stories that should be read with the fresh eyes of a child, an inquiring mind that asks what is behind these words; what hopes, dreams, fears, frustration, and joys are being expressed.

### **Faith and Employment context**

Of the respondents self-identified as Christians, only six (one in ten of the respondents who provided comments) mentioned God or faith in their comments. This may suggest that either only a few people think about their faith in relation to their employment context, or that some people may not be equipped or have practiced expressing how their faith relates to their



employment context. I would suggest that vocational disciple makers may have an opportunity to assist people in articulating how their faith relates to their employment context.

Their comments included the following,

- “I have two workplaces, and both include Christian employers. I feel very blessed to be free to speak about and practice my faith in both and to pray with clients should the occasion arise.”
- “I enjoyed my previous part-time workplace. I felt appreciated there, and although I was not as free to engage in prayer with my clients, I highly valued the Christian-based care provided to clients and coworkers alike.”
- “I know God is at work even if it results in my suffering or being successful. . . . God defines my eternal good for His ultimate glory . . . trusting in Him is the best feeling.”
- “I know God is using me in many ways . . . some of which he gives me the privilege of seeing . . . I see seasons in my career, and right now it is summer.”
- “I believe that God put me here to help the organization adjust to the change[d] workplace during this pandemic.”
- “My previous employers were abusive of workers. Not a positive place. It took the grace of God for me to stay there.”
- “It can be challenging to work alongside colleagues that are openly hostile toward Christ.”
- “Helped me understand my God-given purpose.”

### **Qualitative Results Upper Right Quadrant—Meaningful Work**

Most of the 37 percent of respondents who perceived that their skills were effectively being used in their positions and that they worked in a positive work environment described their work as important, challenging, enjoyable, not boring. While one comment mentions that the job is not perfect, words like *engaging*, *supportive*, *fair*, and *understanding* were used to describe working in the upper right quadrant. Respondents expressed feeling valued, appreciated, blessed, excited, motivated, grateful, content, affirmed, safe, and comfortable. They mentioned coworkers were wonderful people or that they worked in a collaborative community with supportive management.

Respondents described being fulfilled and noted that their work made an impact, or mattered, or made a contribution. Respondents mentioned learning new skills, trying new things, being challenged. They brought up applying experience from previous jobs and career development. One older person expressed fears of becoming unemployed after working thirty-five years in a specific field.

From the tone of their comments, these people enjoy going to work every day. Their comments included,

- “I felt valued and appreciated in my previous role and was able to succeed in some significant strategic areas.”
- “I enjoyed it and felt like I made a positive contribution; my skills were well utilized and appreciated.”
- “Very exciting and dynamic opportunity to work with senior leaders.”
- “Using my skill sets and fulfilling my life’s calling.”

- “Grateful. The current role is not perfect, but I feel like I am serving at a company that really needs my contribution.”
- “I am happy working together with my colleague to finish our daily target production.”
- “Although my job title has remained constant, my role has changed from grunt worker to special projects leader. I love my job!”
- “Very passionate to do the work required in my current position; my skills and strengths are being put to good use.”
- “Both of my positions are utilizing my skills but in different ways. Between the two, I find a high level of satisfaction that I am challenged and utilized to both my benefit and theirs.”
- “Very positive; the people I worked with were wonderful.”
- “It was an honor to serve for the length of time that I did.”

### **Qualitative Results Upper Right Quadrant—Somewhat Meaningful Work**

Forty-six percent of the respondents reported they worked in a role that somewhat effectively utilized their skills or was a somewhat positive environment. Half of these respondents shared similar sentiments to those who worked in positive work environments and felt their skills were well utilized.

The other half of these respondents commented about poor leadership, politics, and coworkers who were ‘bad apples’. They spoke about feeling constrained, bored, underutilized, or capped. Some respondents described their work as without purpose, while others mentioned they

were still exploring their skills or trying to figure out what their passions were. Another mentioned being unsure as to how to navigate the current role.

Comments from the 46 percent of respondents working in somewhat meaningful work included the following,

- “Moderately happy.”
- “I feel valued and affirmed in my current role.”
- “Dynamic work environment with frequent new challenges; will not get bored but stressful at times.”
- “I felt capped.”
- “It was fresh and new and interesting.”
- “I enjoy my work; there are one or two bad apples in our group that are difficult to work with, but my work is something I like doing.”
- “Unsure how long I should stay in the role. I see good things happening in the role but also some things that are prompting me to explore other options.”
- “That one was a learning for me, a lot of challenges, but allowed me to be where I am.”
- “Great job, felt a bit mundane at times, without purpose.”
- “Difficult to manage and interact with individuals with bad attitudes and not efficient to complete assigned activities.”
- “My work environment was enjoyable due to those that I worked with, but it was not an environment that I was passionate to work in.”
- “Everything was good, except the management was quite disorganized. But I do not have to worry about that much in my position as a laborer.”

### **Qualitative Results Upper Left Quadrant—Underemployed**

The 8 percent of respondents who indicated they were underemployed (those who perceived that their skills were not so effectively or not effectively being used in their positions while working in a positive or somewhat positive work environment) used words like *difficult*, *enjoyable*, *indifferent*, *insecure*, *learning*, *unfair*, *unfulfilling*, *unmotivated* to describe their workplace.

It is interesting to note that a few of the respondents expressed that the work was enjoyable, perceived the job as a good place to learn and develop new skills, or the people were nice. These comments are logical considering they indicated they were working in a positive or somewhat positive environment. These comments may also reflect people's choices to be underemployed, for example, if they are raising a family or actively involved in extra-curricular activities in which they find fulfilment. For these people, the positive work environment appears to outweigh the stress of being underemployed.

Comments from 8 percent of underemployed respondents included the following,

- “It was a difficult time working there with the dread of layoffs always in the air.”
- “I felt tired by the sameness.”
- “I pack boxes all day, so it is nice for the part of me that enjoys making things look nice, but I have many other talents.”
- “I have the skills to carry out this position well; but it has nothing to do with my passions or other strengths/skills that I have.”
- “Training was inadequate, so I felt insecure in my role.”
- “The people are nice, but it is unfulfilling.”

- “It is hard to find motivation and excitement, or that I would have something new to offer.”

### **Qualitative Results Lower Right Quadrant—Draining**

A recurring theme from the 4 percent of respondents who were working in the bottom right quadrant (those who perceived that their skills were effectively being used in their positions while working in a negative work environment) reflected their perception of their supervisors or the leadership of the company. They mentioned feeling discriminated against or overlooked. Some respondents indicated that they do not have a lot of respect for senior management or had a toxic boss.

Other respondents described feelings of angst or negativity. Another reflected, “I have more enjoyment accomplishing things on the women’s leadership team at church than plugging away at my job.” Several mentioned that it was time for a new job. There were also several comments about being under resourced.

A few respondents spoke positively and negatively at the same time. This sentiment could be summarized by these comments: “the last one and a half years was challenging, and I learned a lot. But my boss was difficult to work with, so it made me not enjoy the work”; “loved my job and my colleagues but toxic boss”. One person expressed it this way: “There were days when I thought I was very effective”.

Other comments included the following,

- “It was in a position I was not always comfortable with, so it sometimes created some internal angst.”
- “Discriminated, overlooked, forced towards doing something.”

- “It was all about money with little or no regard for the employee.”
- “It was a very positive environment for the first seven years I was there. The last two years have been very negative due to changes in senior management. As a result, the work environment became very hostile and not at all enjoyable.”
- “I know it is temporary. I do not have a lot of respect for senior management.”
- “It was a tough job mentally for myself, so I felt negative.”
- “My previous boss in my old workplace was difficult to work with. I got transitioned into his team for the past one and a half years I was with the company. Before that, I was in a good team, but I felt like I was stagnant and did not learn much.”
- “Toxic, lack of leadership, double standard, lack of trust, lack of communication, targeted, and demoralizing.”
- “Loved my job and my colleagues but toxic boss.”
- “Being in a union environment was restrictive, demoralizing, and political. People either lacked ambition or were overly ambitious to the point of being damaging to others.”

### **Qualitative Results Lower Left Quadrant—Destructive/Corrosive**

The terms *toxic* and *bullying* were recurring words that described how the 7 percent of respondents felt who worked in jobs where they perceived that their skills were not effectively being used in their positions while working in a negative work environment. One person observed, “Leaders have a lot of decision-making power about things that affect the personal life of employees.” Another described how “the supervisor identified what you were good at in the

job and aspects of the job you enjoyed and made sure you were not allowed to work on those things. . . . It was an intentional approach to make people feel bad about themselves and powerless.”

Some comments reflected the transitory nature of their work. “Temp work was horrible because I had to keep bouncing from job to job. Very stressful for someone who doesn’t like meeting new people.” “The job was only temporary, so I knew that things would be better in the future.”

One person commented, “I still put my full effort into my work as it is a reflection of me.” Other comments included: “I worked as hard as I can within tight deadlines”, “I used my ability to adapt well.” Another commented, “I’m grateful today for what I learned there ten-plus years ago, but it was a soul-stomping time”. Other comments included the following,

- “My previous employers were abusive of workers. Not a positive place. It took the grace of God for me to stay there.”
- “I was surrounded by people who did not care for the job, and that affected their attitude and affect others.”
- “The only reason I didn’t say “Not at all effectively” is because it used my ability to adapt well.”
- “My work is interfered with by my direct supervisor because she doesn't understand the work, doesn’t have training in the work that I do, and doesn’t trust my decisions because she herself doesn’t know whether they are good decisions nor not. Lots of defending of decisions needs to be made in my role.”
- “As part of the bullying process, the supervisor identified what you were good at in the job and aspects of the job that you enjoyed and made sure you were not



allowed to work on those things. She also made sure that each person only had a small part of a project so that no one could feel like they were adding value—and just felt like a cog in a wheel. It was an intentional approach to make people feel bad about themselves and powerless. If anyone dared to ask higher-ups to address it, they were treated like they were the problem.”

Respondents’ comments highlight the fact that work environments are quite different and impact them emotionally. Work environments range from places where people feel appreciated, successful, excited, fulfilled, honored to places where people feel angst, discriminated, overlooked, and experienced a lack of trust, communication, and demoralization. Individuals whose work environment falls anywhere on this spectrum may struggle with glorifying God and enjoying him forever. The rocky soil of the workplace may prevent God’s seed from taking root. The worries of the workplace or the deceitfulness of success at work may choke the word making it unfruitful. Yet Jesus tells us clearly that people can hear and understand the word regardless of their employment context and produce a crop that yields hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.<sup>9</sup>

The vocational disciple maker who is sensitive to the impact the work environment has on the people they are discipling should be more effective in discerning how best to produce good soil. Examples of discipleship themes that may be helpful for individuals working in each of these quadrants are highlighted in chapter five.

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<sup>9</sup> Matthew 13:1-23.

## Observations—Transitioning Between Jobs

When looking back at their previous work environments, 8 percent fewer (29 percent instead of 37 percent) felt they were doing meaningful work or working in a role that very effectively utilized their skills in a positive work environment. Similarly, 9 percent fewer (36 percent as compared to 45 percent) felt they were doing somewhat meaningful work in their previous jobs. There is a corresponding 9 percent increase (from 7 percent to 16 percent) in respondents who felt they were previously working in a destructive or corrosive environment (bottom left quadrant). Similarly, there was a 9 percent increase (from 4 percent to 13 percent) of those who perceived that their previous jobs were draining (bottom right quadrant). For this sample, the percentage of respondents who felt they were underemployed in their previous jobs essentially remained the same (6 percent in their previous roles and 8 percent in their current roles) (table 10).

**Table 10. Previous position.**

Work Environment	Underemployment		Meaningful	
Positive (Healthy)	0	1%	10%	27%
Somewhat Positive	0	5%	21%	5%
	Destructive / Corrosive		Draining	
Somewhat Negative	1%	10%	9%	1%
Negative (Toxic)	2%	4%	3%	1%
Use of Skills, Strengths, Passions—Current Role	Not at all effective (%)	Not so effective (%)	Somewhat effective (%)	Very effective (%)

Note: Twenty-nine percent of respondents perceive that they were employed in meaningful work in their previous roles. (Numbers do not add to 100 because of rounding.)

When comparing which quadrant respondents were in for their previous roles with their current roles, I observed that 54 percent of the respondents remained in the same employment context. Seventeen percent ended up in a worse situation while 29 percent found their new jobs were in the upper right quadrant or a better position (table 11). This is consistent with the 18 percent increase in respondents perceiving that their current roles as meaningful or somewhat meaningful work (from 65 percent to 83 percent). The discrepancy between the statistics for the current job and the previous job was unexpected. One possible explanation comes from informal conversations with several respondents who indicated that the organizations they are currently employed with are much healthier than their previous organizations.

**Table 11. Percent of respondents who shifted quadrants when their jobs changed.**

To Top Left      7%	To Top Right    29%
To Bottom Left      6%	To Bottom Right    4%

Note: Twenty-nine percent of the respondents who changed jobs ended up with a job in the upper right quadrant, 17 percent ended up in a worse situation; and 54 percent remained in the same quadrant.

### **Qualitative Results from Job Changers**

Respondents were asked to describe their feelings and attitudes towards their work after the transition from their previous positions to their current positions. Almost all the respondents provided a comment (97 out of 106).

The sentiment of those who perceived that they moved to a job in the upper right quadrant or who remained in the upper right quadrant can be summarized by these comments: “It

was like a breath of fresh air”, “changed from ‘have to go to work’ to ‘get to go to work’.

Respondents moving to the upper right quadrant expressed sentiments like engaged, positive, relieved, happy, excited, scared, grateful, released. These positive emotions are consistent with other research that shows people are happier when they are working in jobs that they enjoy.

Some of the respondents who changed jobs to another position in the top right quadrant indicated that their new job was stressful, or the experience was intense or a major switch.

It is tempting when observing the enjoyment and positive sentiments respondents expressed when moving to a job in the upper right quadrant to conclude that the best way to help people with their job situations is to help them find a job that utilizes their skills, strengths, and passions in a positive work environment. While this might have been God’s intent before the fall, as I suggested in chapter two, God’s primary interest is his relationship with people in their current contexts and transforming them into Christ’s image.

One question a vocational disciple maker has to wrestle with when discipling people in the workplace is when it is beneficial to assist someone to transition to a job in the upper right quadrant, and when is it appropriate to help them discern how to glorify God and enjoy God in their current work environment. The answer to this question will be different for each person. The answer may also vary for different employment situations that a person experiences throughout their career. This is simply a reflection of the marvelous uniqueness of each person that God created.

The sentiment of those who perceived that they moved from the bottom left quadrant could be summarized by this comment: “I was actually afraid when I moved. I was afraid that I really was worthless, that my abilities were not good enough to succeed.” This is an example of someone who needs hope.

A few respondents commented about moving from the top right quadrant to a different quadrant. They expressed grief and shock. One person describes how “learning project management and leading individual projects was a step up . . . [but I] should be under a different assignment.” This is an example of a person who needs someone to walk alongside them through the grieving process so that they can come to the point where they can glorify God.

Ninety-five respondents (about 90 percent) did not mention God in their responses. Insufficient data was collected to understand what role they believe God had in their job changes. Of the nine respondents (about 10 percent) who mentioned God, their comments included

- “God’s provision and directing my path . . . my preference is job security . . . His preference is God security in relationship with Him.”
- “It was led by God.”
- “I am always thankful to God for my current job.”
- “Life was viewed differently, pursuit of work-life balance was the priority, more time to grow in faith, happy, excited, challenged, friendship, motivated.”
- “I work more wholeheartedly as I work for God.”
- “I was led by God to my new position. I was being obedient and knew it would be fruitful.”
- “I am very happy and thankful to God for my current position . . . working in the office with a higher salary and good retirement benefits.”
- “The change was a major switch. I appreciate both jobs for the riverside growth opportunities. I know God is using them for a greater purpose.”
- “It was good at first. I knew learning project management and leading individual projects that way was a step up, though much harder. But really, I am realizing

now that some of this was hard training, and my passions, skills, and strengths should be under a different assignment. I am spending tons of time with God right now to discover where I really should be, and I'm hearing and realizing that I'm in the wrong industry. There's conviction and hope and I'm ready to do whatever God wants for my life. I want to work with him on His assignment and I feel He is inviting me to something new."

As this research demonstrates, employment contexts are fluid and dynamic. External and internal influences can cause a person's employment context to change at any time. This research shows that vocational disciple makers need to be cognizant of when a person's employment context changes and be present to walk with people throughout the journey of their career.

Further research is required to understand if the respondents had bought into a philosophy of seeking a job in the upper right quadrant or if there were other factors that caused them to change jobs. When a person is going through the job change process, this may be an opportunity for the vocational disciple maker to explore what their understanding of God and their faith in God had in their decision to change jobs. This research suggests that the vocational disciple maker may wish to remain in contact with people whose job changes to see if they perceive themselves working in a different quadrant of this employment model in their new position. New opportunities for discipleship may arise when a person finds themselves in a different quadrant of this employment model as a result of their new job.

Since three in four of the respondents indicated that teaching on biblical truths that relate to the issues they experience in the workplace would be useful or extremely useful, further

research is needed to understand how this teaching might influence people's decisions to remain or change jobs when their employment contexts change.

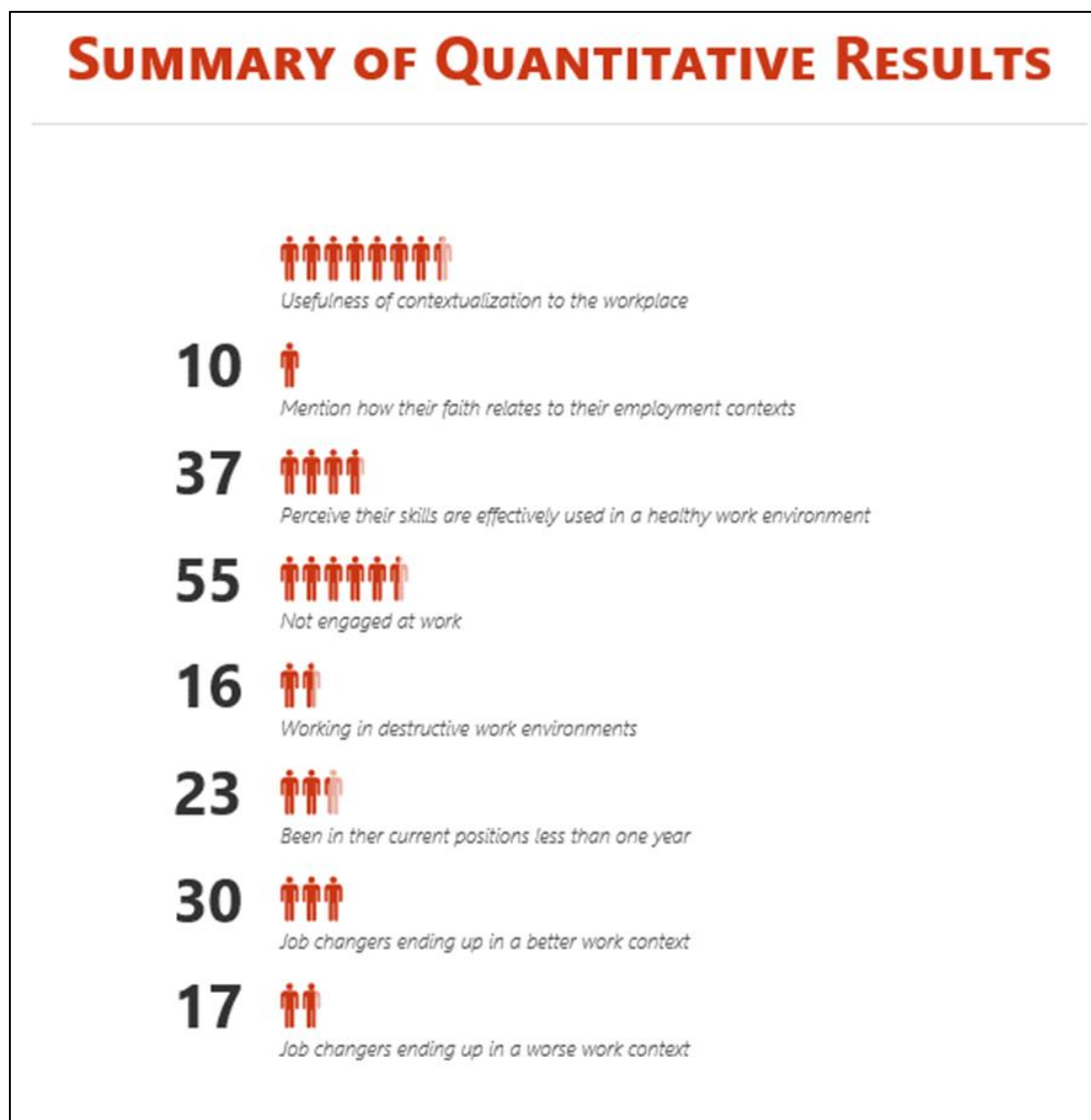
### **Summary of Qualitative and Quantitative Data**

Utilizing this employment model and the quantitative results of the survey, I have made the following observations as illustrated in figure 22:

1. Approximately three out of four self-identified Christians (74 percent) believe teaching biblical truths that relate to the issues they experience in the workplace would be useful or extremely useful.
2. Only one in ten self-identified Christians mention how their faith in God relates to their employment contexts. This could reflect the fact that people were not asked directly about how their faith related to their employment contexts. Or it could reflect that most people do not see a connection between their faith and their employment contexts.  
  
Further research is needed in this area.
3. Approximately one-third (37 percent) of self-identified Christians perceive that their skills are very effectively being used in their jobs and they work in positive or healthy work environments. These people describe themselves as supported, utilized, comfortable, and enjoying their work.
4. Just over half (55 percent) of self-identified Christians are not engaged at work. Either they perceive that their skills are not being used effectively in their jobs or they work in a negative work environment. They might say they feel indifferent, insecure, unfulfilled, demoralized, or experience angst about their work. Some go so far as to say that they work in a negative environment and their bosses are making work difficult for them.

5. At any point in time, between 7 percent and 16 percent of self-identified Christians perceive that they are working in destructive or corrosive work environments. While a few of these people express sentiments like “There were days when I was very effective,” the majority reflect angst and negative feelings towards the leadership of their organizations.
6. More men (41 percent) than women (30 percent) perceive that their skills are very effectively being used in their jobs and they work in positive or healthy work environments.
7. Fewer millennials and Generation Z self-identified Christians perceive that their skills are very effectively being used in their jobs and that they work in positive or healthy work environments.
8. Approximately one-quarter of self-identified Christians (23 percent) have been in their current jobs for less than one year. Another quarter (25 percent) have been in their current jobs for one to three years. This would suggest that approximately half of self-identified Christians are experiencing stress related to job changes.
9. Approximately half of those who change jobs remain in a similar employment context. Approximately one in three (30 percent) end up in a better employment context, while one in six (17 percent) end up in a worse employment context. This suggests that self-identified Christians who re-enter the workforce or who change jobs may need additional support or different support depending on their new job contexts.





**Figure 22. Summary of quantitative results.** All numbers are expressed as percentages.

### Consolidated Results

To consolidate the results of this thesis-project, I developed a unique persona for each of the quadrants. These personas describe the organizational characteristics, mental health impact, employee engagement and a biblical example. They also include quotes from individuals and example discipleship opportunities. These example discipleship opportunities are elaborated in Appendix C.

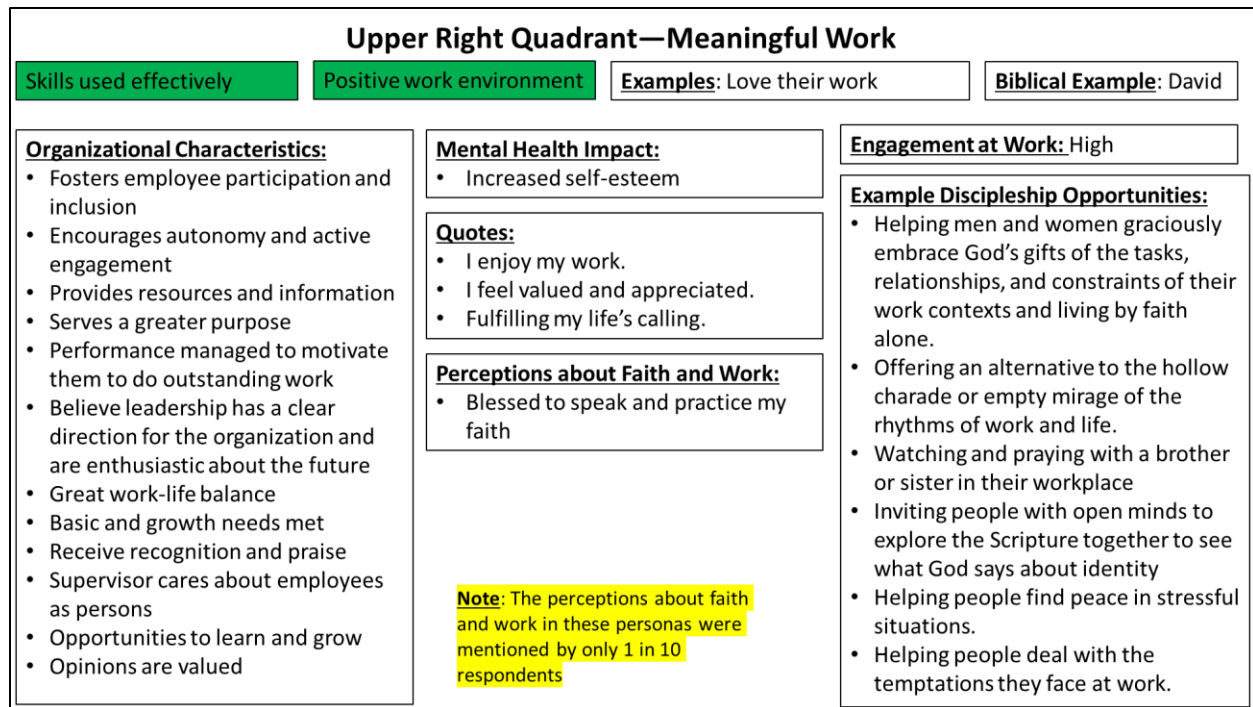


Figure 23. Persona of a person working in the upper right quadrant.

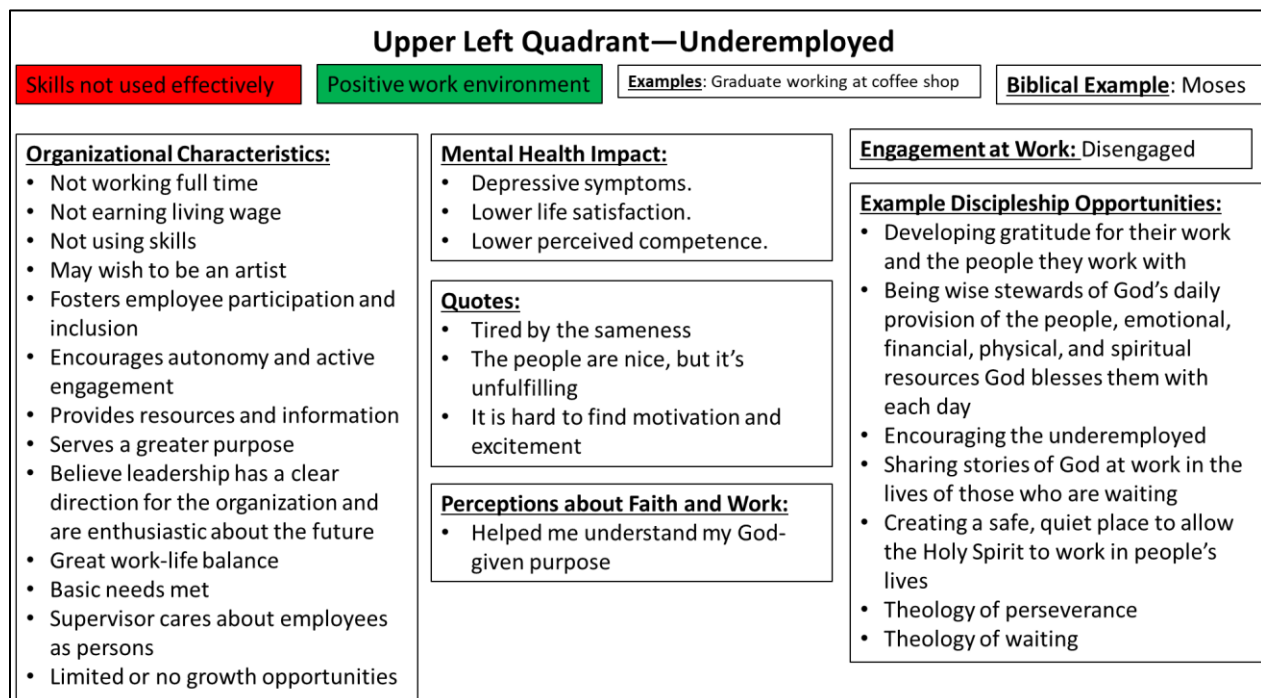


Figure 24. Persona of a person working in the upper left quadrant.

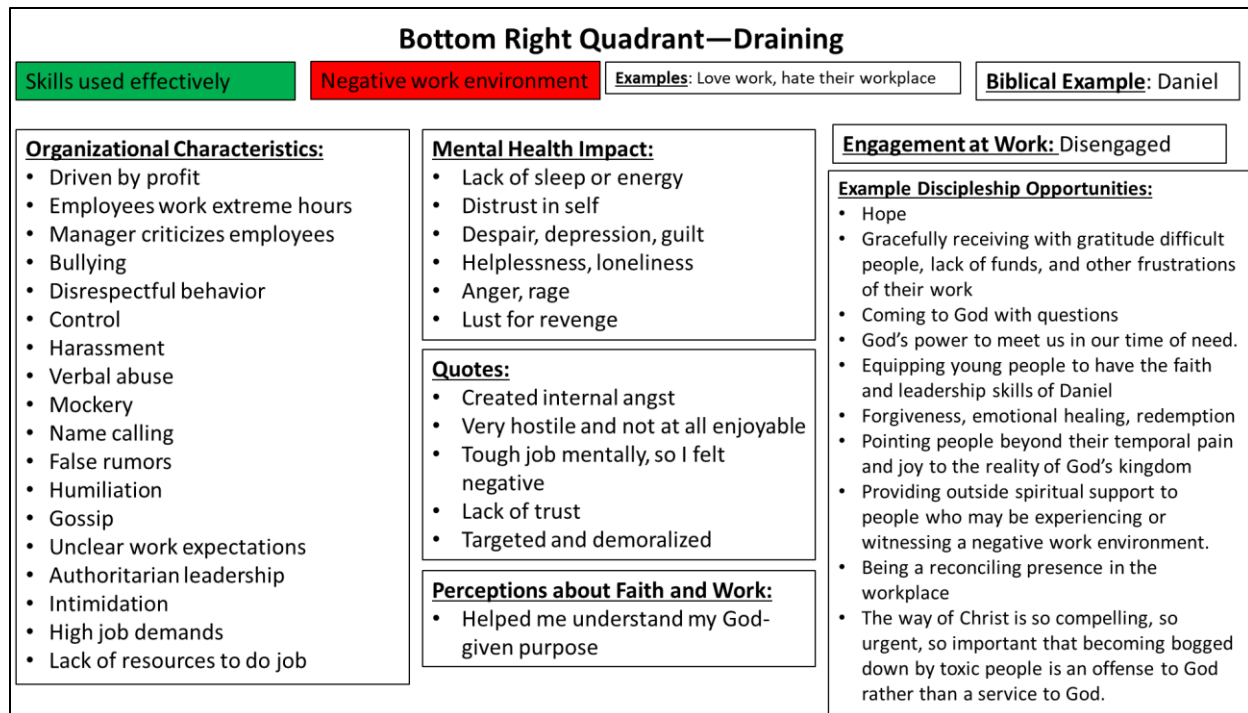


Figure 25. Persona of a person working in the bottom right quadrant.

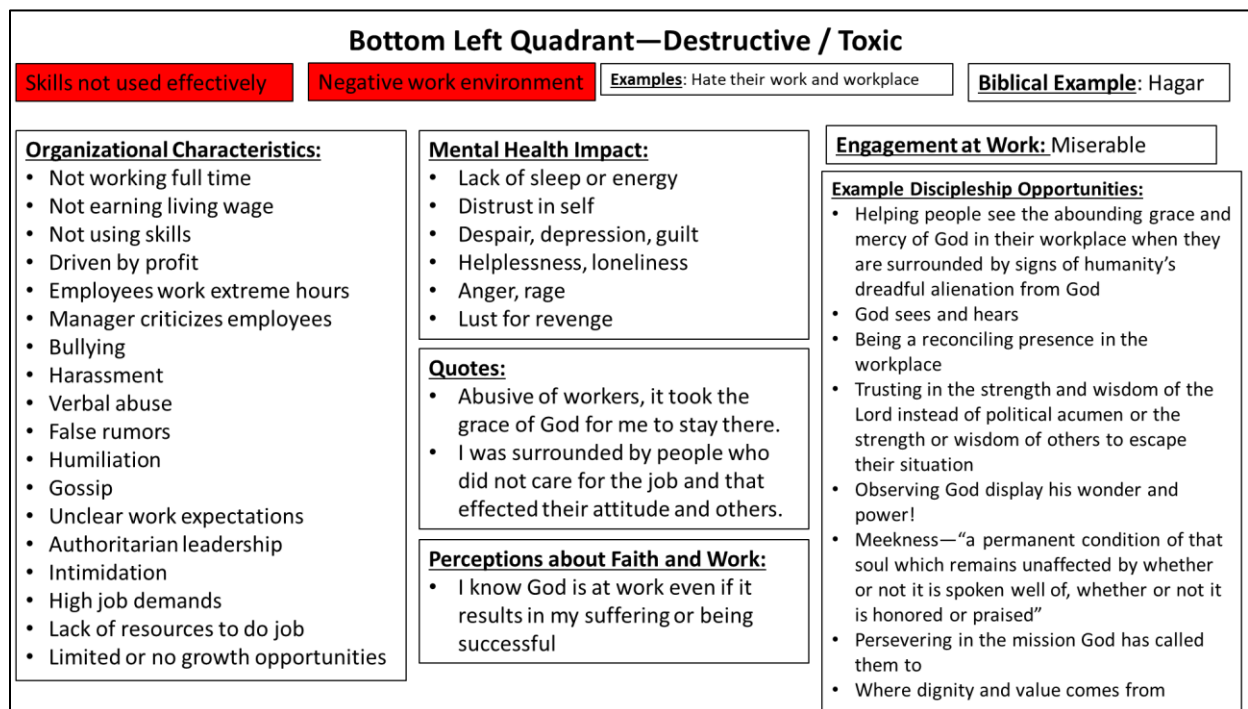


Figure 26. Persona of a person working in the bottom left quadrant.

### **Practitioners' Reflections on the Usefulness of This Employment Model**

The second part of this thesis-project was to explore how useful this employment model, or the data represented by this employment model, is to enable vocational disciple makers to contextualize their ministries.

Three out of four of the respondents (74 percent) indicated that teaching biblical truths related to the issues they experience in the workplace would be useful or extremely useful. What this thesis-project does not answer is how to contextualize vocational discipleship based on this employment, which is beyond the scope of this thesis-project. The importance of answering this subsequent “how to” question became apparent upon reviewing this model with practitioners.

In an email exchange with Lee Eclov, pastor of Village Church of Lincolnshire in Lake Forest, Illinois, Pastor Eclov suggested, “While an average sized church has workers in a variety of different workplaces, each is different and the demands upon them [are] different. Most local churches have trouble being sensitive to those specific kinds of demands. Moreover, there are so many churches where pastors are not very savvy about the demands upon their people in the workplace, nor about the broader role of Christians in the workforce—beyond evangelism.”<sup>10</sup>

Eclov’s observations are consistent with Ecklund’s research, which showed that only one in four evangelical Christians have heard their faith leader often/very often discuss how congregants should behave at work or speak about the meaning of work.<sup>11</sup> The literature review

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<sup>10</sup> Email from Lee Eclov to James Bruyn on 2020-11-20 8:24 PM.

<sup>11</sup> Elaine Howard Ecklund, Denise Daniels and Rachel Schneider, “From Secular to Sacred: Bringing Work to Church”, *Religions* 2020, 121, 442; doi:10.3390/rel11090442, www.mdpi.com/journal/religions, August 2020.

on contextualization suggests that contextualizing theology to people's experience is a win-win for the church and the people being discipled.

This suggests that this employment model may be useful for vocational disciple makers. To test this hypothesis, three pastors were asked to respond to an emailed presentation describing the model and research results, and four pastors were asked to respond to a virtual presentation of the model and research results.

People with whom I shared this employment model initially, along with the reviewers of the model, all mentioned moving people to the upper right quadrant. This is not surprising since McKinsey's research, Gallup's research and *Strength Finders* are all strong voices for individuals to find work in the upper right quadrant.<sup>12</sup> A colleague of mine shared with me his *Clifton Strengths Signature Theme Report*. In this report he was told "By focusing on your Signature Themes, separately and in combination, you can identify your talents, build them into strengths, and enjoy personal and career success through consistent, near-perfect performance."<sup>13</sup>

However, as Timothy Keller points out, if people merely achieve their goals and fulfill their wildest dreams, they will only succeed in becoming alienated from the person they were meant to be. People can only become themselves if they do what they were created to do—to serve and obey God unconditionally, to love and rejoice in him above all other things.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Boston Consulting Group in "What is the Growth Share Matrix" <https://www.bcg.com/en-ca/about/our-history/growth-share-matrix> and Gartner in "Positioning technology players within a specific market" <https://www.gartner.com/en/research/methodologies/magic-quadrants-research> also suggest that the upper right quadrant is the preferred quadrant when they use a four-quadrant model.

<sup>13</sup> Gallup Clifton Strengths, "Your Signature Theme Report" (Survey Completion Date 08-07-2020).

<sup>14</sup> Timothy Keller, "The Pastor", In *Uncommon Ground*, edited by Timothy Keller and John Inazu, 21. (Nashville: Nelson Books, 2020).

A Christian worldview acknowledges that in an unfallen world, God would intend for each person to be working in a position that utilizes their strengths in the upper right quadrant of this employment model. Yet for many people today this is not a present reality, just as it was not a present reality for the slaves in Ephesus. Therefore, Paul admonishes the Christians in Ephesians 6:5–7 to serve their employers wholeheartedly as if they were serving the Lord, not people. Paul’s teaching implies that Christians who are not working in the upper right quadrant of this employment model can distinguish themselves from their colleagues by their lifestyle.

While Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, tells slaves that if they can gain their freedom, they should do so, he goes on to tell people that they should remain in the situations they were in when God called them.<sup>15</sup> Rath, in *Strength Finders*, proposes that helping people find jobs aligned to their strengths will change the world around them.<sup>16</sup> However, I suggest that a Christian worldview does not stop with a desire to change the world through work. Rather, God, working through people of faith, is the one who brings reconciliation, peace, grace, hope, and, ultimately, change to the workplace. As Paul admonishes, and as shown by the examples in chapter two, the vocational disciple maker can equip people to live by faith and bring reconciliation, peace, grace, hope, and economic benefits to their corner of the world while working in any of these quadrants.

One reviewer commented, “I love the work you’ve done with your employment model. It speaks articulately to the reality that God is present in all of work, all of the time, even when we

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15. 1 Corinthians 7:21–24.

16. Rath, *Strength Finders 2.0*, location 353.

find ourselves in work that is less than the ‘meaningful’ quadrant.” Another reviewer commented that this employment model is helpful to understand “a biblical view of suffering”.

Several of the pastors commented that the most useful part of this material was the example discipleship opportunities outlined in the personas.

Several of the reviewers of the model highlighted the fact that “over the course of a career, most people will find themselves moving from one quadrant to the next because of both internal vocational changes and external work environment changes. I think it would be interesting to speak more to this kind of long-term vocational journey, and how we stay ‘centered’ in Christ through it all.” This is a valid observation and highlights how this employment model might be beneficial to vocational disciple makers as they disciple people throughout their career.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS

*There are no problems or issues of the modern workplace that are insurmountable by the grace and power of God. The dilemmas people face in the postmodern workplace continue to be addressed in God's economy by the same gospel the Church has always proclaimed.*  
—James Bruyn

It is clear from this research project that this employment model is effective in highlighting the nuances of people's concerns and experiences in their workplaces. This research is based on the premise that God is with his children in their workplace and should be the supreme object of their pursuit (Matthew 6:33). This research is different than other research into work. 'Strength Finders' places humanity at the center of their research, and explores how people can experience 'success' when they find a job that is aligned to their skills, strengths, and passions while working in healthy environments.<sup>1</sup> Gallup's research into the 'State of the American Workplace' places the employer at the center of their research, and explores the economic impact on the company when employees are working in jobs that are aligned to their skills, strengths, and passions while working in healthy environments.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear from the theological reflections of this thesis-project that the Bible is replete with examples of men and women who understand that God sees how each person's job aligns to their skills, strengths, and passions, and sees the health of their work environment (i.e., in which

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<sup>1</sup> "Your Signature Themes are very important in maximizing the talents that lead to your successes. By focusing on your Signature Themes, separately and in combination, you can identify your talents, build them into strengths, and enjoy personal and career success through consistent, near-perfect performance." Gallup Clifton Strengths, "Your Signature Theme Report" (Survey Completion Date 08-07-2020).

<sup>2</sup> Gallup, "State of the American Workplace," 2017, <https://cloc.umd.edu/library/research/State%20of%20the%20American%20Workplace%202017.pdf>.



quadrant of this employment model an individual is employed). The stories of David, Moses, Daniel and Hagar provide four vastly different examples of what a life of radical discipleship might look like in the workplace. Their stories demonstrate that God is intimately present in each person's employment context, equipping them to find shalom and to faithfully serve Him in their workplace.

While these Biblical stories are true, this research demonstrates that for many Christians allowing Christ to live His life through them in their workplace may not be their present reality. Many Christians may be more preoccupied by what is happening in their employment context or with changing their employment context than experiencing life with God in their current job situation.

For the Christian, my research confirms that this employment model provides a framework to think through how Scripture can relate to their employment context. There is no greater joy than to be disciple of Christ believing that we are beloved, and God is present with us in our current employment context whether our skills are well utilized or not, whether the environment is healthy or toxic. With eyes that are clearer, not dimmer, a radical disciple of Christ sees with hope that the workplace holds more possibility, not less; and is brighter, not duller! I believe that people of faith will be transformed into Christ's image when they choose to embrace their employment context as God's pasture, where God has placed them, and expect to encounter God in their workplace. Those who tarry in their place of employment have the privilege of seeing God's blessing and hand at work in their life, and to be a reconciling influence in their workplace, or to bring a canopy of grace to their workplace.

While I believe this thesis-project has demonstrated the importance of contextualizing vocational discipleship to enable people to live as radical disciples in the workplace, Ecklund's

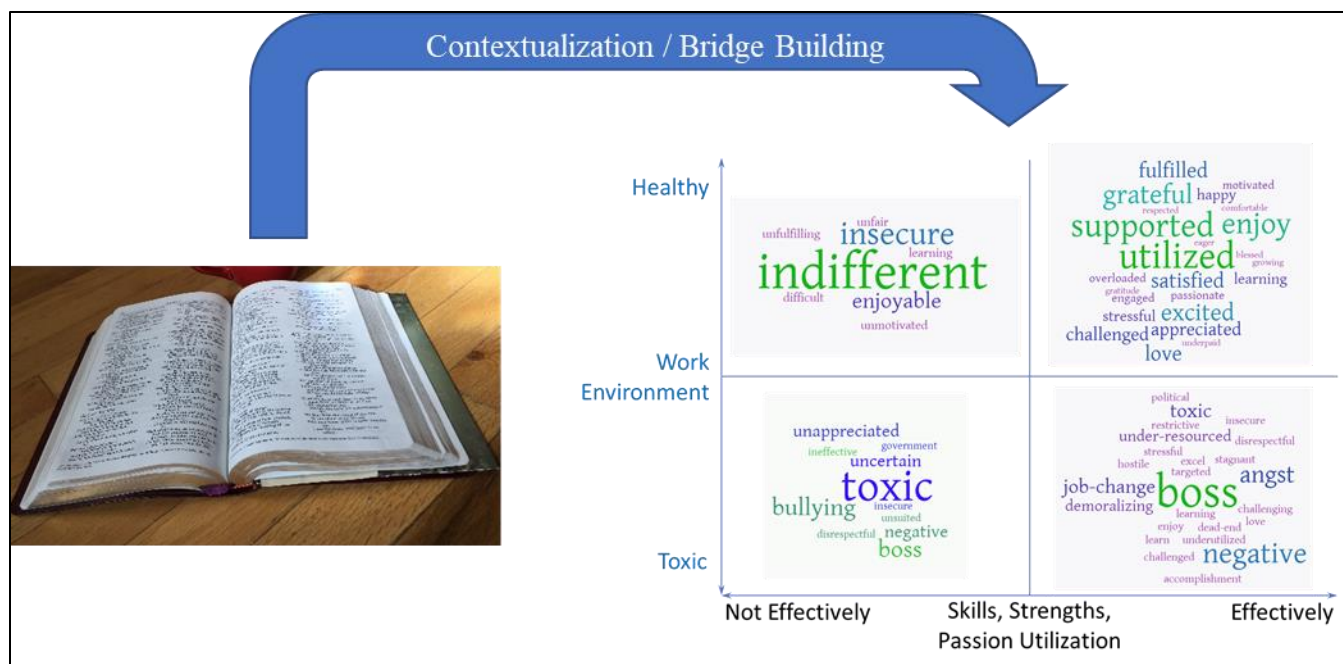
research shows that approximately only one in four people have heard their pastor effectively build a bridge between their employment context and the Bible.<sup>3</sup> The research I conducted illustrates that three out of four Christians expressed that having these bridges built for them would be useful or extremely useful.

What is clear from this research project is that this employment model could be one tool that may help the vocational disciple maker to understand various employment environments so that they can contextualize their discipleship. By combining job fit and work environment, this model provides the vocational disciple maker with four categories which describe how employees experience different employment contexts, as well as their associated feelings and attitudes.<sup>4</sup> Coming out of this research, I believe there is an opportunity to build tools that vocational disciple makers can utilize to build bridges between the Bible and these employment environments (figure 27).

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<sup>3</sup>. Elaine Howard Ecklund, Denise Daniels and Rachel Schneider, “From Secular to Sacred: Bringing Work to Church”, *Religions* 2020, 121, 442; doi:10.3390/rel11090442, www.mdpi.com/journal/religions, August 2020.

<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, this employment model provides a new way of looking at the research on underemployment by adding the dimension of the impact of work environments on people’s feelings and attitudes toward underemployment. Likewise, this employment model provides a new way of researching healthy and toxic work environments by adding the dimension of how effectively a job utilizes a person’s skills, strengths and passions influence their reactions to the health of their work environment.



**Figure 27. Contextualizing the Bible to employment contexts.**

I would suggest that by building these bridges (i.e., for effective contextualization to the workplace), the themes of the vocational discipleship may require moving beyond the abstract theological language of creation, fall and redemption to a richer, broader, practical conversation of how God is mysteriously and faithfully present in every employment context enabling people to live as Christ followers wherever God has placed them.

Vocational disciple makers have the immense privilege of coming alongside people in any of the four employment contexts described by this model and helping them stand firm in their faith when the rulers, the authorities, the cosmic powers, the spiritual forces of veil in the heavenly places attack their faith or cast doubts or stir up fear (Ephesians 6:12).

This thesis-project tested this employment model in a predominantly middle class, Caucasian, corporate context. Further research will be needed to test this model in other contexts (i.e., with blue collar workers, self-employed or those working in small businesses). This thesis-project has tested this model at a point in time. Further research is required to understand how a

disciple's personal walk and growth alters their perceptions and responses to their workplace. There are many other dimensions including social structures, political structures, ethics, economics, and world views that may need to be considered when contextualizing discipleship in the workplace. Further research is required to understand how these, and other influences impact the workplace, and how the vocational disciple maker can equip employees to live with Christ in the midst of these influences. Appendix B—Additional Reflections on This Employment Model includes a list of additional suggestions for further research as well as a possible refinement to the model.

From my experience, the work of the vocational disciple maker has only begun once they have helped people relate their faith in God to their employment context. The next phase is to help these individuals encourage their brothers and sisters in Christ by sharing their stories. As the research for this thesis-project demonstrated, only one in ten people mentioned how their faith impacted their attitudes toward their work. I have observed that some individuals who have learned to effectively share stories of how their faith relates to the ecstasies and agonies of their work, may need equipping in discerning the best way to spiritually care for their coworkers and leaders in the place of employment where God has placed them.

I believe that this research has demonstrated that this employment model provides both the language and the opportunity for the vocational disciple maker to engage in conversations with people in the workplace to answer Francis Shaeffer's question "how then should we live?" I believe that collecting and sharing these stories will inspire more Christians to live as radical disciples of Christ. I also believe that collecting and sharing tools and examples of vocational disciple makers effectively contextualizing to people working in each of the four employment

contexts identified by this employment model will be one of many ways that will see the Church grow and flourish in the west.

## APPENDIX A

### CHRISTIAN FAITH AND WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY

The following table is based on the examples of Moses, David, Hagar, and Daniel, as well as other Old Testament individuals who are commended for their faith in Hebrews 11. This table illustrates one way that the Christian faith delivers the expressed outcomes of workplace spirituality. These examples are illustrative only and not meant to be exhaustive. These examples illustrate the importance of understanding people's employment context as people face different challenges depending on their employment context.

Expressed outcome of workplace spirituality <sup>1,2</sup>	Biblical example
Feeling less alienated from work, self, and others	Hagar, who was able to go back to work for Abraham and Sarah when she realized that God was El Roi—the God who sees. When people realize that God sees them and that they are not alienated from God, they discover that they do not need to be alienated from themselves, their work, and others.
Increased creativity and intuition	Daniel's faith gave him the creativity to propose an alternative to the dietary requirements of Babylon. Daniel's faith gave him the intuition and wisdom to respond with tact when he realized that Nebuchadnezzar wished to kill all his wise men. Through prayer, Daniel found a solution that not only protected his life but the lives of all the Babylonian wise men.

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1. Jessica Word, "Engaging work as a calling: examining the link between spirituality and job involvement", *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion*, May 2012, 151.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14766086.2012.688622>

2. Fahri Karakas, "Spirituality and Performance in Organizations: A Literature Review", *Journal of Business Ethics* (2010) 94:96, 101, DOI 10.1007/s10551-009-0251-5.

Improved ethical behavior	David was tempted by Bathsheba, a temptation he might have been able to avoid by keeping his eyes fixed on Christ.
Better leadership	Moses's unshakeable faith in God gave him the confidence to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land.
Stronger, more cohesive vision and purpose	Those whose faith is in God shift their focus from themselves to glorifying God. As Paul said in Philippians 3:13–14: “Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it: but this one thing I do Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”
Enhanced team and community building	People of faith are called to a new way of life that includes loving their neighbors as themselves. This selfless love is the foundation for team and community building.
Meaningful work	Faith alone enables people to find purpose in their work regardless of their work environments or how their skills align with their work. For faith alone sees every job as part of God's bigger vision and story; thus, every job has a purpose. Faith alone enables people to engage their creativity in their jobs to reflect the beauty and glory of the Creator.
Enhanced mental and physical well-being and quality of life	First, faith shifts the audience that a person works before from the approval of friends, relatives, and bosses to the approval of God alone. A life lived by faith in the Son of God, who loves us and gave Himself for us, is a life that has nothing to fear, nothing to lose, nothing to regret, and everything to gain in the workplace. Secondly, faith fills people with hope for the future. This hope is not based on their employment contexts and cannot be taken from them by their employers.
Higher profits and greater productivity	While the Bible does not explicitly state the economic impact that people have on their companies or societies, consider the economic impact of the following:

- Israel losing 70,000 men as a result of David's lack of faith and conducting a census.
- Forty days of lockdown because Saul did not believe God could deliver Israel from Goliath.
- Benefits Daniel's wisdom brought to Babylon through his leadership.

Further research could be conducted to explore the life of Christians, many of whom were slaves working during the first century: observing their job circumstances, what quadrants were they in, what 'keeping their eyes on Christ' looked like for them in their work situations, and what their economic impact was.<sup>3</sup>

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3. Alvin J. Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004).



## APPENDIX B

### ADDITIONAL REFLECTIONS ON THIS EMPLOYMENT MODEL

#### **The Changing Nature of Work**

As the nature of work changes, the structures that defined the vertical dimension of this employment model including workplace relationships between employer and employee and defined workplace relationships between colleagues and the places where people work are all undergoing significant changes. These changes will influence where people perceive themselves in the vertical dimension of this employment model.

Some of these changes include the following

- (a) A decline in the promise of secure employment.
- (b) Shifting the nature of work from covenant to contract to transaction.
- (c) Shift from work occurring in a fixed place.
- (d) Shifting definitions of identity.
- (e) Shifting values.
- (f) Moral rewards of work becoming inaccessible.
- (g) Loss of a God consciousness.

At the same time as the vertical dimension of this employment model is changing, the horizontal dimension or the nature of work is undergoing a radical change as the tasks of some careers become automated while other jobs arise requiring new skills. These changes are shifting how people perceive the alignment of their skills across the horizontal dimension of this model.

Schwab suggests that today's transformation is unique in terms of the great speed with which new ideas and technologies are spreading around the world. In the coming decades, the

technologies driving the fourth industrial revolution will fundamentally transform the entire structure of the world's economy, our communities, and our human identities.<sup>1</sup>

A 2018 RBC study suggests that in the coming decade, half of all jobs will be disrupted by technology and automation, requiring a new mix of skills.<sup>2</sup> They found that Canada is shifting from a “jobs” economy to a “skills” economy.

A 2018 study by PwC suggests that a third of workers are anxious about the future and their jobs due to automation—anxiety that kills confidence and the willingness to innovate.<sup>3</sup> Rapid technological change and increased international competition has resulted in many employees needing to continually develop new skills to adapt to changing technologies and shift product demand.<sup>4</sup> According to a PwC report, 65 percent of respondents globally think technology will improve their job prospects in the future.<sup>5</sup> Seventy percent of the respondents would consider using treatments to enhance their brain and body if this improved employment prospects in the future.<sup>6</sup>

According to a Korn-Ferry study, people's stress levels at work have increased from 10 percent to 30 percent over the past three decades in the United States. Their research shows that

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1. Schwab, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*.

2. “Humans Wanted: How Canadian youth can thrive in the age of disruption,” RBC (updated July 3, 2018), <https://www.rbc.com/dms/enterprise/futurelaunch/humans-wanted-how-canadian-youth-can-thrive-in-the-age-of-disruption.html>.

3. PwC, *Workforce of the Future: The competing forces shaping 2030* (2018), 5. <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/services/people-organisation/workforce-of-the-future/workforce-of-the-future-the-competing-forces-shaping-2030-pwc.pdf>.

4. Lynn A. Karoly and Panis Constantijn, *21 Century at Work: Forces Shaping the Future Workplace and Workplace in the United States* (Rand Corporation, 2004), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/dtl/detail.action?docID=197471>, 13.

5. PwC, *Workforce of the future*, 35.

6. PwC, *Workforce of the future*, 17.

the root cause of this stress is the prospect of losing their jobs to artificial intelligence and the pressure to learn new skills because of automation and business disruption.<sup>7</sup>

Some of these changes to the rhythms of work might be painful, costly, or brutal to life. David Wells in *Losing Our Virtue* suggests that the vocational disciple maker may have an opportunity to offer an alternative to the hollow charade or empty mirage to the emerging rhythms of work and life.<sup>8</sup>

Poloz argues that while it is human nature to worry mainly about the destruction part of the story of new technology, in time new technology creates a rising tide that raises all boats.<sup>9</sup> The challenge is for people to imagine or envision the final destination, and what role they might play in it. The gospel is a message of hope. God is a God of abundance. This premise might provide vocational disciple makers with the opportunity to bring people together to look beyond the immediate impact of technology on their job, to the future and hope God has promised and to explore in community how to shape the future of technology.

### Choices

Many people do not have the privilege of choosing which quadrant of this employment model they work in (i.e., many people do not have the privilege of choosing work that is aligned with their skills or choosing a healthy work environment life). Heppner and Jung point out that much of the world's population, including much of the United States, do not enjoy the privilege

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7. *The Case for Motivation: What's sapping it, what will bring it back*, Korn Ferry Institute (2018) <https://www.kornferry.com/content/dam/kornferry/docs/article-migration/IntrinsicMotivation.Summer2018.pdf>

8. David Wells, *Losing our Virtue* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998) Kindle Edition Locations 708–10.

9. Stephen Poloz, "Technological Progress and Monetary Policy: Managing the Fourth Industrial Revolution," Bank of Canada Staff Discussion Paper 2019-11 (November 2019), 2.

of choosing the type of work they do. Most people around the world work at whatever they can find to feed themselves and their families. The constructs of interests, skills, values, and job fit are not considered salient variables by much of the world's workforce.<sup>10</sup>

Conversely, upper-class and middle-class individuals in the West have an immense variety of job and career choices.<sup>11</sup> As David Wells points out, this leads to the possibility of people thinking that they might have chosen unwisely, or potentially wondering if things could have been different had they chosen a different career path.<sup>12</sup> This overabundance of choices can lead people to focus their energies on seeking the perfect job with the perfect employer rather than seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

This suggests that vocational disciple makers should be cognizant that the people they are discipling might be at opposite ends of the spectrum—those with limited job choices and those with an abundance of job choices. Further research is needed to understand if the spiritual needs of individuals in these two categories are the same or different. For example, would an understanding of the “purpose of God” in work be equally helpful for those who have limited job choices versus those who have seemingly endless job choices?

### **Socially Useless Jobs**

This employment model does not include employees' perceptions of the social usefulness of their jobs compared with their assessments of the job as far as it relates to their skills and work environments. According to Dur, in 2015 eight percent of the people they surveyed perceived

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10. W. Bruce Walsh, et al., ed., *Handbook of Vocational Psychology: Theory, Research, and Practice*, (New York, Routledge, 2013), 82. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/dtl/detail.action?docID=1209530>.

11. Walsh, et al., ed, *Handbook of Vocational Psychology*, 83.

12. Wells *Losing our Virtue*, Location 1104–09.

their jobs as socially useless.<sup>13</sup> A British study from 2015 suggests that 37 percent of working British adults say that their jobs are not making a meaningful contribution to the world.<sup>14</sup> The British study found that despite this, most people with ‘meaningless’ jobs say it is unlikely they will change jobs in the next year.

Anecdotally, in one conversation with a respondent trained as a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA), she wondered what the enduring value was of producing annual reports for her corporation. As people journey throughout their career, they have a multitude of different experiences. Each experience could be viewed as a potential discipleship opportunity. Figure 30 highlights one way of illustrating the discipleship journey of a person’s career.

### **Possible Further Refinements of the Model**

The analysis highlights that the positivity or negativity of work environments influences respondents’ perceptions of their employment contexts. Those nuances were most pronounced by the respondents’ sentiments in the upper right quadrant (meaningful work).

This employment model includes four sub-categories of meaningful work:

1. Those who feel their skills, strengths, and passions are very effectively used in their jobs and work in a positive healthy environment.
2. Those who feel their skills, strength, and passions are somewhat effectively used in their jobs and work in a positive (healthy) environment.

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13. Robert Dur and Max van Lent “Socially Useless Jobs” (SSRN Scholarly Paper. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, March 30, 2018).

14. Wahl Dalgren, *37% of British workers think their jobs are meaningless* (You Gov, August 12, 2015). <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/lifestyle/articles-reports/2015/08/12/british-jobs-meaningless>

3. Those who feel their skills, strength, and passions are very effectively used in their jobs and work in a somewhat positive environment.
4. Those who feel their skills, strength, and passions are somewhat effectively used in their jobs and work in a somewhat positive environment.

Respondents in the first sub-category (those who feel their skills, strengths, and passions are very effectively used in their jobs and work in a positive healthy environment) were unanimous in their expression of positive sentiments and enjoyment of their work. Those in the other three sub-categories of the upper right quadrant expressed a mixture of positive and negative sentiments. This may suggest that the model might be improved if a somewhat effective use of skills and somewhat positive work environments should be included in the neighboring quadrants. (i.e., instead of drawing the model as shown in figure 28, drawing the model as shown in figure 29). Further research is needed to determine if that is a valid consideration.

Work Environment	Underemployment		Meaningful	
Positive (Healthy)				
Somewhat Positive				
	Destructive / Corrosive		Draining	
Somewhat Negative				
Negative (Toxic)				
Use of Skills, Strengths, Passions—Current Role	Not at all Effective	Not so Effective	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective

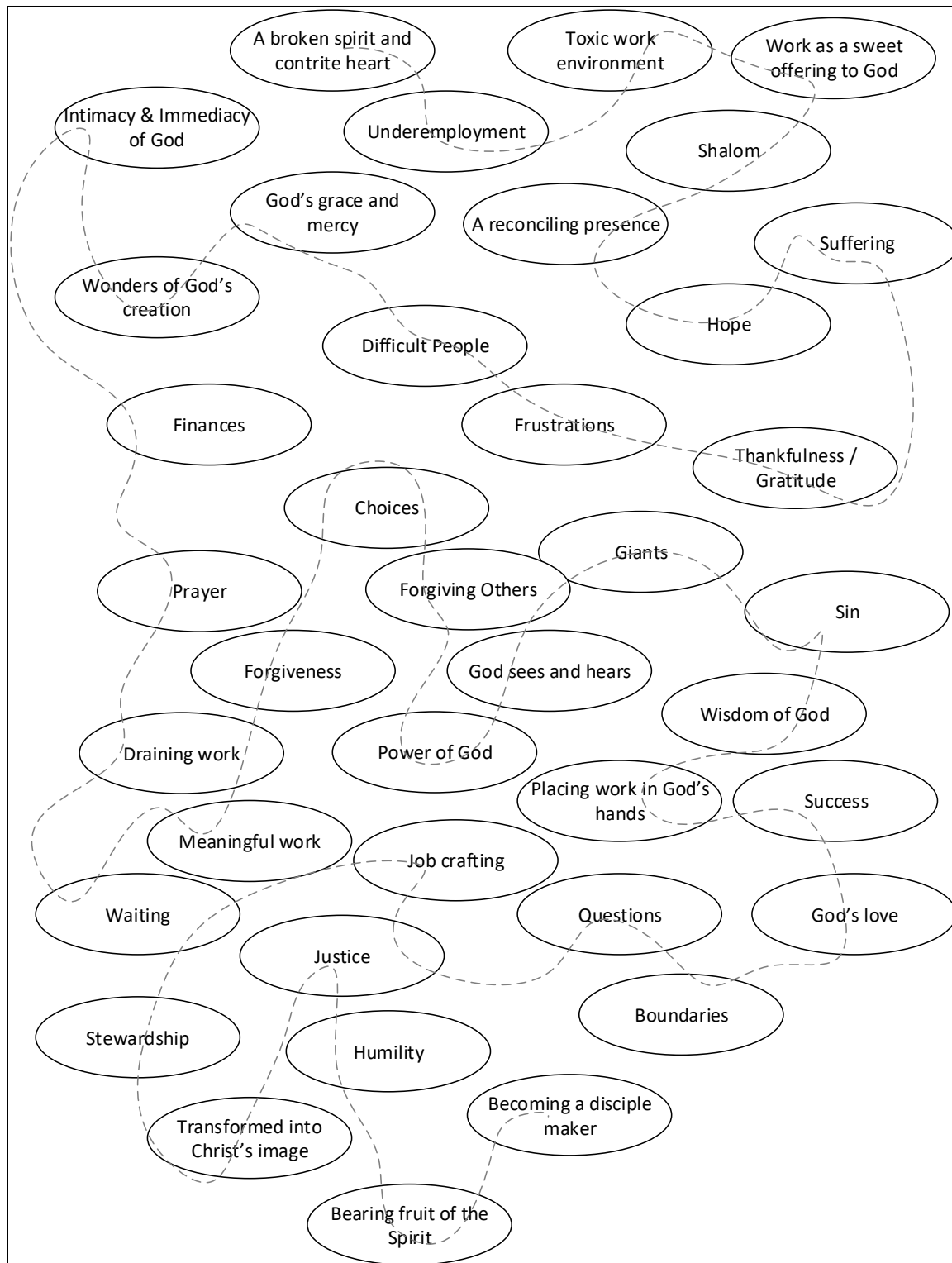
**Figure 28. Original Model.** Proposed model for contextualizing workplace discipleship.

Work Environment	Underemployment			Meaningful
Positive (Healthy)				
	Destructive / Corrosive			Draining
Somewhat Positive				
Somewhat Negative				
Negative (Toxic)				
Use of Skills, Strengths, Passions—Current Role	Not at all Effective	Not so Effective	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective

**Figure 29. Alternative Model.** Shifting the ‘Meaningful’ quadrant to include only those whose skills are very effectively utilized working in a positive work environment.

### The Discipleship Journey

As people journey throughout their career, they have a multitude of different experiences. Each experience could be viewed as a potential discipleship opportunity. Figure 30 highlights one way of illustrating the discipleship journey of a person’s career.



**Figure 30. An illustration of the discipleship journey in the workplace.**



## Areas for Further Research

As a result of preparing this thesis-project, I realized that the following areas could be considered for further research.

1. Collecting contemporary stories of how Christians cope in negative and toxic environments, similar to the stories of Corrie ten Boom, Daniel, and Hagar.
2. Exploring if there is any observable difference between the behaviors of Christians and non-Christians who work in jobs that are not aligned with their skills.
3. Exploring how the concept of God's Kingdom relates to the four quadrants of this employment model.
4. Exploring the life of Christians working during the first century, many of whom were slaves – looking at their job circumstances – what quadrant were they in, what did 'keeping their eyes on Christ' look like for them in their work situation, and what was their economic impact.<sup>15</sup>
5. Researching niche segments of the job market including migrant workers working in the agriculture industry<sup>16</sup> and immigrants working in the health care<sup>17</sup>, meat

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<sup>15</sup> See Alvin J. Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World* (Zondervan, 2001, 2004)

<sup>16</sup> Jonathon Gatehouse, *How Undocumented migrant workers are slipping through Ontario's COVID-19 net*. (CBC News, July 02, 2020) <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/leamington-migrant-workers-1.5633032>

<sup>17</sup> *Inquiry into coronavirus nursing home deaths needs to include discussion of workers and race* (2020) <https://theconversation.com/inquiry-into-coronavirus-nursing-home-deaths-needs-to-include-discussion-of-workers-and-race-139017>

- processing plants<sup>18</sup> and garment factories<sup>19</sup> to see how they perceive their work environment.
6. Exploring why the younger generation may not perceive that their skills are being fully utilized in their jobs. Some of this may be explained by the changing nature of work and the types of jobs in which the younger generation are employed.
  7. Exploring if the spiritual needs of those with seemingly endless job choices are different than the spiritual needs of those with limited job choices.
  8. Exploring the concept from the Westminster Catechism of ‘glorifying God and enjoying him forever’ influences employee engagement and decisions to seek alternate employment.
  9. Understanding how people working remotely establish their vocational identity, define their career, or envision their destiny while in front a computer screen in their home, without the benefits and challenges of working in a defined place.
  10. The impact of positive Christian role models on the workplace.
  11. Examining if high skill alignment is a mitigating influence in the toxicity of negative work environments.

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<sup>18</sup> Adam MacVicar, *OHS report finds COVID-19 investigation at Cargill High River plant did not include worker representation*. (Global News, May 10, 2020). <https://globalnews.ca/news/6927246/cargill-ohs-investigation-workers/>

<sup>19</sup> Meg Lewis, *Leicester’s coronavirus lockdown is no surprise to its garment factory workers*. (The Guardian, July 3, 2020). <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jul/03/leicester-coronavirus-lockdown-is-no-surprise-to-its-garment-factory-workers>

12. Understanding the impact leaders whose identity is shaped by their purpose, passion and creativity have on the people they are leading.<sup>20</sup> In particular, this research should evaluate how purpose, passion and creativity that is transient based on the cause of the day. How does a leader's values of purpose, passion or creativity influence how they manage their team? Will these leaders create healthier work environments or more toxic work environments? Conversely, how will individuals whose identity is shaped by purpose, passion or creativity feel about more traditional or more transactional work environments?
13. Understanding the impact of millennium and generation-z leaders shaped by the values of benevolence (helping friends and family), self-direction (independent thought and management) and hedonism (having fun, self-gratification) have on the people they are leading.<sup>21</sup> How might values of benevolence, self-direction and hedonism, influence how a leader shapes their work environment or relates to their coworkers and direct reports? Will a person with these values create healthier work environments or more toxic work environments?
14. Understanding how the emerging generation's perception of organizational values influences their perception of the work environment. If they perceive a misalignment in values, will they view their job in the lower half of this proposed employment model?

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<sup>20</sup> Allison Griffin, *The Future of Work is Rooted in Purpose*.  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alisongriffin/2019/09/16/the-future-of-work-is-rooted-in-purpose/#5c1668c53342>

<sup>21</sup> University of Waterloo, *Are You Ready to Manage The Workforce of the Future?* (Waterloo, 2019).  
<https://uwaterloo.ca/hire/how-to-recruit-motivate-and-retain-gen-z-at-work-future-workforce-survey-and-management-guide>

15. Understanding if workplace spirituality might help those working in the bottom left quadrant of this employment model (working in a toxic environment with work that is not aligned to their skills) feel less alienated from work, self, and others.
16. Exploring if workplace spirituality increases empowerment or improves the leadership of people working in the upper right quadrant (working in a job aligned to their skills and in a great work environment).
17. Researching how this employment model might add to the understanding of underemployment by correlating work environment to underemployment.
18. Further research needs to be conducted on niche segments of the job market including migrant workers working in the agriculture industry<sup>22</sup> and immigrants working in the health care<sup>23</sup>, meat processing plants<sup>24</sup> and garment factories<sup>25</sup> to see how they perceive their work environment.
19. Exploring how this employment model might be beneficial to describe work experiences over a person's career.
20. Exploring the efficacy of the example discipleship opportunities as shown in the personas and elaborated on in Appendix C.

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<sup>22</sup> Jonathon Gatehouse, *How Undocumented migrant workers are slipping through Ontario's COVID-19 net*. (CBC News, July 02, 2020) <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/leamington-migrant-workers-1.5633032>

<sup>23</sup> *Inquiry into coronavirus nursing home deaths needs to include discussion of workers and race* (2020) <https://theconversation.com/inquiry-into-coronavirus-nursing-home-deaths-needs-to-include-discussion-of-workers-and-race-139017>

<sup>24</sup> Adam MacVicar, *OHS report finds COVID-19 investigation at Cargill High River plant did not include worker representation*. (Global News, May 10, 2020). <https://globalnews.ca/news/6927246/cargill-ohs-investigation-workers/>

<sup>25</sup> Meg Lewis, *Leicester's coronavirus lockdown is no surprise to its garment factory workers*. (The Guardian, July 3, 2020). <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jul/03/leicester-coronavirus-lockdown-is-no-surprise-to-its-garment-factory-workers>

21. Further research is required to identify what might be required to move vocational disciple makers through the applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating phases of Bloom's taxonomy so that vocational disciple makers can effectively contextualize the Gospel in the workplace.
22. In 2001, Marc Gunther writing in Fortune Magazine asked the question will today's ad hoc efforts to integrate faith and work coalesce into something bigger and more powerful with long-lasting effects, or will they fizzle?<sup>26</sup> Almost twenty years have passed since this question was posed. Further research needs to be conducted to see if an approach based on Bloom's revised taxonomy would bring something bigger and more powerful to the faith and work movement.

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<sup>26</sup> Marc Gunther *God & Business Bringing spirituality into the workplace violates the old idea that faith and fortune don't mix.* (Fortune Magazine, July 9, 2001).

## APPENDIX C

### POTENTIAL VOCATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

As people journey throughout their career, they have a multitude of different experiences. Each experience could be viewed as a potential discipleship opportunity. Figure 30 highlights one way of illustrating the discipleship journey of a person's career.

There is a rich diversity of truths of the Scripture that are relevant to employment contexts. Understanding the context of the people they are communicating to and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit should help the vocational disciple maker understand which rich theological truths from Scripture, or which of the infinite facets of God's character might be applicable, and how best to communicate them. The following list of potential discipleship opportunities arose from the theological reflections and literature review for this thesis-project and illustrate the art of the possible.

Potential discipleship opportunities that may apply to individuals regardless of their employment context include,

1. Listening to stories people share about their feelings and attitudes towards their work environment and position.
2. Facilitating safe conversations where people can wrestle with some of the difficult choices that people make in the workplace.
3. Inviting people to explore how belonging to God's family relates to their work.
4. Helping people discern God's presence, God's character and how God is working in their life.
5. Helping people see that Christ's love compels them to work and care for his creation and the people they work with and for.

6. Training people to provide spiritual care / peer support for coworkers. Be cautious about assuming that Christians have invested in meaningful relationships with their co-workers.
7. Teaching people that what happens at work can never take away their hope, joy, or peace.
8. Helping people reorient their lives towards God rather than the agonies and ecstasies of their workplace.
9. Explaining how the cross makes sense of life in the workplace.
10. Pointing out to someone that they have sinned and declaring the consequences of their sins. Walking with people along the journey of forgiveness, restoration, and healing (i.e., Nathan to David).

Potential discipleship opportunities that may apply to individuals in the upper right quadrant of this employment model (those engaged in meaningful work) include,

1. Helping men and women graciously embrace God's gifts of the tasks, relationships, and constraints of their work contexts and living by faith alone.
2. Offering an alternative to the hollow charade or empty mirage of the rhythms of work and life.
3. Watching and praying with a brother or sister in their workplace.
4. Inviting people with open minds to explore the Scripture together to see what God says about identity.
5. Helping people find peace in stressful situations.
6. Helping people deal with the temptations they face at work.

Potential discipleship opportunities that may apply to individuals in the upper left quadrant of this employment model (those who are underemployed) include,

1. Developing gratitude for their work and the people they work with.
2. Being wise stewards of the people, emotional, financial, physical, and spiritual resources God blesses them with each day.
3. Encouraging the underemployed.
4. Sharing stories of God at work in the lives of those who are waiting.
5. Creating a safe, quiet place to allow the Holy Spirit to work in people's lives.
6. Theology of perseverance.
7. Theology of waiting.

Potential discipleship opportunities that may apply to individuals in the bottom right quadrant of this employment model (those who are in draining work environments) include,

1. Hope.
2. Gracefully receiving with gratitude difficult people, lack of funds, and other frustrations of their work.
3. Coming to God with questions.
4. God's power to meet us in our time of need.
5. Equipping young people to have the faith and leadership skills of Daniel.
6. Forgiveness, emotional healing, redemption.
7. Pointing people beyond their temporal pain and joy to the reality of God's Kingdom.



8. Providing outside spiritual support to people who may be experiencing or witnessing a negative work environment.
9. Being a reconciling presence in the workplace.

Potential discipleship opportunities that may apply to individuals in the bottom left quadrant of this employment model (those who are in toxic / destructive work environments) include,

1. Helping people see the abounding grace and mercy of God in their workplace when they are surrounded by signs of humanity's dreadful alienation from God.
2. God sees and hears.
3. Being a reconciling presence in the workplace.
4. Trusting in the strength and wisdom of the Lord instead of political acumen or the strength or wisdom of others to escape their situation.
5. Observing God display his wonder and power!
6. Meekness—"a permanent condition of that soul which remains unaffected by whether or not it is spoken well of, whether or not it is honored or praised".
7. Persevering in the mission God has called them to.
8. Where dignity and value come from.
9. The way of Christ is so compelling, so urgent, so important that becoming bogged down by toxic people is an offense to God rather than a service to God.

Potential discipleship opportunities that may apply to those who are experiencing changing work situations include,

1. Seeking to understand the impact a job change has on people, and what they tangibly need during and after their job change.
2. Helping people articulate what is the pinnacle of their career.
3. Helping people grasp afresh the immediacy and intimacy of God being part of their story throughout their career transition.
4. Watching God, who took the death of Jesus on the cross and brought redemption to all who place their faith in Jesus, take someone's changing work situation, and with his patient and unfailing love, redeem it.
5. Helping people keep their eyes focused on Christ throughout the transition.
6. Nurturing people as the Spirit works in their life to transform them into Christ's image through the experiences of their work context and job changes.
7. Providing the spiritual, emotional, and practical resources to sustain people and prepare them for new employment contexts.
8. Engaging with people to develop a meta-narrative or five-year or ten-year plan for their life.

Potential discipleship opportunities that may apply to those working in non-traditional work contexts include,

1. Teaching sacred practices that might address the demoralization and stresses caused by the uncertainty of secure employment.
2. Creatively establishing faith communities for those with non-traditional work arrangements. Recognizing that those working in non-traditional work arrangements may not be able to attend regularly scheduled faith community

gatherings because of the unpredictability of their work. Cognizant that in non-traditional work arrangements, an hour spent with a faith community is an hour of lost income.

3. Exploring theological truths and practices with people who are detached from other real people and real places because of remote-work or work which is not tied to a fixed place.
4. Equipping Christians to actively engage in influencing the trends towards the workplace of the future.

APPENDIX D  
SAMPLE WORKPLACE DEVOTIONAL

**Wisdom for the Workplace**

*Wisdom calls aloud outside; She raises her voice in the open squares. She cries out in the chief  
concourses, At the openings of the gates in the city She speaks her words.  
—Proverbs 1:20–21*

At your place of work, amid all the noise competing for your heart's attention, God calls to you, offering you his wisdom. God's wisdom is unique. This world in which you live, and work is God's handiwork. As the Creator, God is the only one who knows exactly how everything is designed. Instead of providing you with an owner's manual, the Creator desires to enter into a personal relationship with you and to share firsthand how everything functions. Relying on his wisdom and understanding will enable you to do your job with excellence.

God's wisdom is true, just, and perfect. It teaches you prudence and discretion while providing you with counsel and sound judgment and insight. God's wisdom will enable you to make just decisions and to lead well. God understands the intricacies of the hearts of those you work and live alongside, so with his wisdom you can love and relate to them in a way that aligns with God's kingdom purposes.

The wisdom of God comes with the promise of a rich blessing. Should you choose to follow his wisdom, your life will produce fruit that is more precious than rubies and better than fine gold, and its yield surpasses choice silver. The day is coming when Christ will redeem the work you are doing today. If you are going about your work with God's wisdom, no matter how menial or fascinating the work is, when it is refined by fire, in some inexplicable, mysterious way, it will be purified like gold and silver.

The work you are doing today has immense value when you continually rely on God's wisdom. The One who created you, rejoices over you, and loves you says this to you today:

So now, children, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. Listen to my instruction so that you may be wise, and do not neglect it. Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching at my doors day by day, waiting beside my doorway. For the one who finds me finds life and receives favor from the Lord. (Proverbs 8:33–35 NET)

### **PRAYER**

Almighty God, give me ears to hear your words of instruction so that I may always dwell in your house and bring glory to your name by the way I live. *Amen.*

## APPENDIX E

### EMPLOYMENT MODEL SURVEY

I am currently studying for a DMin degree in Workplace Theology, Ethics and Leadership at Gordon Conwell Seminary. As part of my thesis-project, I am conducting this survey to build an infographic that describes people's attitudes and feelings towards their work. Thank you in advance for participating in this survey.

This is an anonymous, confidential survey. Please do not identify yourself in any of the responses.

By completing this anonymous questionnaire, you have given your consent that you are a voluntary participant in this study.

This survey will take approximately 3-5 minutes to complete.

For this survey, you will be asked to describe some characteristics of your current job as well as your previous job. Your "previous" job could have been with the same employer or a different employer.

1. About how many years have you been in your current position?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ At least 1 year but less than 3 years
- ☐ At least 3 years but less than 5 years
- ☐ At least 5 years but less than 10 years
- ☐ 10 years or more

2. Thinking about your current position, overall, do you feel positively or negatively about your work environment?

- ☐ Positively
- ☐ Somewhat positively
- ☐ Somewhat negatively

- ☐ Negatively

Describe your feelings or attitude toward your current work environment.

3. Thinking about your current position, how effectively do you feel your skills, strengths or passions are put to good use?

- ☐ Very effectively
- ☐ Somewhat effectively
- ☐ Not so effectively
- ☐ Not at all effectively

Describe your feelings and attitude toward your current position.

4. Thinking about a previous position with your current employer or a different employer, how many years were you in that position?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ At least 1 year but less than 3 years
- ☐ At least 3 years but less than 5 years
- ☐ At least 5 years but less than 10 years
- ☐ 10 years or more

5. Thinking about that previous position, overall, did you feel positively or negatively about your work environment?

- ☐ Positively
- ☐ Somewhat positively
- ☐ Somewhat negatively
- ☐ Negatively

Describe your feelings and attitudes towards your previous work environment.

6. Thinking about that previous position, how effectively do you feel your skills, strengths or passions were put to use?

- ☐ Very effectively
- ☐ Somewhat effectively
- ☐ Not so effectively
- ☐ Not at all effectively

Describe your feelings and attitude toward your previous position.

7. Describe your feelings and attitude toward work after the transition from your previous position to your current position.

8. How useful would teaching on Biblical truths that relate to the issues you experience at your work be?

- ☒ Extremely useful
- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Not so useful
- ☐ Not at all useful

9. Which category below includes your age?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65+

10. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other / prefer not to say



APPENDIX F

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

**Table 12. Quantitative Results.**

#	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q8	Q9	Q10	CURR	PREV
1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	TR	TR
2	1	2	3	3	1	1	3	3	1	TL	TR
3	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	TR	TR
4	2	1	2	4	4	3	1	3	1	TR	BL
5	2	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	TR	BL
6	4	1	1	2	1	1	3	3	1	TR	TR
7	4	1	2	1	3	3	3	3	1	TR	BL
8	1	2	2	4	3	3	3	2	2	TR	BL
9	1	2	3	1	3	3	3	2	2	TL	BL
10	2	3	2	1	1	1	3	3	2	BR	TR
11	2	1	2	3	2	1	2	3	2	TR	TR
12	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	3	1	TR	TR
13	2	1	2	1	3	2	2	2	1	TR	BR
14	1	3	3	4	2	2	3	3	2	BL	TR
15	2	1	1	4	2	2	2	4	2	TR	TR
16	2	2	2	4	1	2	2	4	2	TR	TR
17	3	3	2	3	1	1	3	6	2	BR	TR
18	2	2	2	1	2	3	1	5	2	TR	TL
19	4	2	2	4	2	2	3	6	2	TR	TR
20	4	2	2	4	2	2	1	6	2	TR	TR
21	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	6	2	TR	TR
22	1	1	1	4	2	2	1	5	2	TR	TR
23	5	2	1	2	3	2	3	7	2	TR	BR
24	5	1	2	5	1	2	2	4	1	TR	TR
25	5	1	1	5	4	3	1	5	1	TR	BL
26	1	1	2	2	3	3	1	5	2	TR	BL
27	5	1	1	4	1	1	2	6	1	TR	TR
28	3	4	4	4	4	2	2	6	1	BL	BR
29	5	2	1	2	1	1	1	6	1	TR	TR
30	5	2	2	4	2		1	6	2	TR	
31	1	1	3	2	1	3	2	3	1	TL	TL
32	2	1	1	4	4	2	2	5	2	TR	BR
33	5	2	2	4	3	2	2	4	1	TR	BR
34	1	1	2	5	2	2	2	4	2	TR	TR
35	5	1	1	2	2	2	3	6	1	TR	TR
36	1	2	2	4	2	2	2	5	1	TR	TR
37	1	2	1	4	3	1	1	4	1	TR	BR
38	5	1	1	5	1	1	2	7	2	TR	TR
39	1	1	1	2	4	4	3	5	1	TR	BL
40	2	1	1	3	3	3	2	5	2	TR	BL
41	2	1	1	4	4	3	1	5	2	TR	BL
42	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	5	1	TR	TL
43	2	1	2	5	2	2	2	5	2	TR	TR
44	5	1	1	5	1	1	1	6	2	TR	TR
45	3	1	1	2	3	2	2	6	1	TR	BR
46	4	1	1	4	1	1	2	5	2	TR	TR
47	2	3	3	1	1	2	2	2	1	BL	TR

#	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q8	Q9	Q10	CURR	PREV
48	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	6	2	TR	TR
49	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	5	2	TR	TR
50	4	2	3	3	4	1	3	5	3	TL	BR
51	2	1	1	2	3	3	1	4	1	TR	BL
52	2	1	2	4	3	2	2	3	1	TR	BR
53	4	2	2	5	2	1	3	5	2	TR	TR
54	2	2	1	2	4	2	1	4	1	TR	BR
55	5	1	2	2	2	2	3	6	2	TR	TR
56	4	1	1	5	2	2	1	6	2	TR	TR
57	4	1	1	4	1	1	2	6	2	TR	TR
58	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	4	2	TR	TR
59	1	2	2	3	1	1	3	5	2	TR	TR
60	5	1	2	4	1	1	2	6	3	TR	TR
61	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	3	1	TR	BL
62	4	1	1	5	3	2	3	6	1	TR	BR
63	5	2	2	3	3	3	1	5	2	TR	BL
64	5	1	2	5	1	2	2	7	1	TR	TR
65	3	1	1	3	1	2	1	6	2	TR	TR
66	4	1	3	4	1	2	1	4	1	TL	TR
67	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	4	2	TR	BL
68	5	1	1	3	1	1	2	5	2	TR	TR
69	5	1	1	4	2	3	1	6	2	TR	TL
70	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	4	1	TR	TR
71	3	1	1	3	1	2	1	5	2	TR	TR
72	2	1	2	4	1	2	2	5	2	TR	TR
73	2	1	2	4	1	1	1	6	2	TR	TR
74	5	1	1	2	1	1	2	5	2	TR	TR
75	4	1	1	3	1	1	1	5	2	TR	TR
76	4	1	1	4	1	1	1	5	2	TR	TR
77	2	1	1	1	4	3	3	5	1	TR	BL
78	2	2	1	3	3	2	1	4	1	TR	BR
79	5	1	1	2	2	3	2	6	1	TR	TL
80	4	2	2	3	2	2	1	5	1	TR	TR
81	5	1	1	5	1	1	3	7	2	TR	TR
82	4	2	2	4	1	1	3	7	2	TR	TR
83	5	2	3	1	2	2	2	7	2	TL	TR
84	2	1	2	2	1	1	3	6	2	TR	TR
85	5	1	1	2	1	1	1	5	2	TR	TR
86	4	3	2	3	2	2	3	4	1	BR	TR
87	3	1	1	5	3	2	1	7	2	TR	BR
88	2	3	3	4	4	4	1	6	1	BL	BL
89	3	1	1	4	1	1	1	6	2	TR	TR
90	1	2	1	5	2	1	1	6	2	TR	TR
91	2	3	3	4	1	1	1	4	1	BL	TR
92	5	3	3	2	2	2	2	6	2	BL	TR
93	4	1	1	5	2	3	2	5	1	TR	TL
94	5	3	3	5	2	1	1	6	2	BL	TR
95	5	1	2	5	1	1	1		2	TR	TR
96	5	2	3	2	1	2	1	6	1	TL	TR
97	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	6	2	TL	BR
98	4	3	2	4	1	2	2	5	1	BR	TR
99	5	1	2	2	3	4	3	4	1	TR	TL
100	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	4	2	TR	TR
101	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	4	1	TR	TR
102	4	1	1	4	1	1	1	6	2	TR	TR

#	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q8	Q9	Q10	CURR	PREV
103	4	1	2	4	1	1	2	4	1	TR	TR
104	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	4	2	TR	TR
105	4	2	2	4	2	2	1	5	2	TR	TR
106	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	4	2	TR	TR

**Legend:**

Q1: About how many years have you been in your current position?

1. Less than 1 year
2. At least 1 year but less than 3 years
3. At least 3 years but less than 5 years
4. At least 5 years but less than 10 years
5. 10 years or more

Q2: Thinking about your current position, overall, do you feel positively or negatively about your work environment?

1. Positively
2. Somewhat positively
3. Somewhat negatively
4. Negatively

Q3: Thinking about your current position, how effectively do you feel your skills, strengths or passions are put to good use?

1. Effectively
2. Somewhat effectively
3. Not so effectively
4. Not effectively

Q4: Thinking about a previous position with your current employer or a different employer, how many years were you in that position?

1. Less than 1 year
2. At least 1 year but less than 3 years
3. At least 3 years but less than 5 years
4. At least 5 years but less than 10 years
5. 10 years or more

Q5: Thinking about that previous position, overall, did you feel positively or negatively about your work environment?

1. Positively
2. Somewhat positively
3. Somewhat negatively
4. Negatively

Q6: Thinking about that previous position, how effectively do you feel your skills, strengths or passions were put to use?

1. Effectively
2. Somewhat effectively
3. Not so effectively
4. Not effectively

Q8: How useful would teaching on Biblical truths that relate to the issues you experience at your work be?

1. Extremely Useful
2. Very Useful
3. Somewhat Useful

Q9: Which category below includes your age?

1. Under 18
2. 18-24
3. 25-34
4. 35-44
5. 45-54
6. 55-64
7. 65+

Q10: What is your gender?

1. Female
2. Male
3. Other / prefer not to say

Cur: Current Quadrant of this employment model

TR: Top Right  
 TL: Top Left  
 BR: Bottom Right  
 BL: Bottom Left

Prev: Previous Quadrant of this employment model

TR: Top Right  
 TL: Top Left  
 BR: Bottom Right  
 BL: Bottom Left

Qualitative responses are indicated in the tables below and can be correlated to the respondents' survey answers by the survey number in column one of the above tables.

## APPENDIX G

### RESPONDENTS' COMMENTS

**Table 13. Comments—Upper Right Quadrant—Meaningful Work.**

<b>Coding</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Q#</b>
appreciated	I felt valued and appreciated in my previous role and was able to succeed in some significant strategic areas.	73	5
appreciated, supported	important work; appreciated and supported.	62	2
blessed	I have two workplaces, and both include Christian employers. I feel very blessed to be free to speak about and practice my faith in both and to pray with clients should the occasion arise.	27	2
challenged, enjoy	It's a challenge, and I enjoy it.	106	3
challenged, stressful	Dynamic work environment with frequent new challenges; will not get bored but stressful at times.	60	2
challenged, stressful	Similar in nature to the current job—dynamic and challenging, stressful at times but never get bored.	60	5
comfortable	Safe and comfortable, excited to be working in my new work environment.	84	2
effective	It took time to work out how best to be effective in this role, but looking back I was able to be effective.	73	6
engaged, supported	Very engaging and supportive atmosphere.	13	3
engaged, supported	very engaged. good work environment due to the leadership.	65	2
enjoy	I enjoy what I do.	76	2
enjoy	Enjoyed the work and customer service.	10	5
enjoy	I enjoyed what I did.	76	6
enjoy	Very good. I feel like going to work every day.	41	2
enjoy	It was not quite as good a fit as the present one but still good.	57	5
enjoy	It was an honor to serve for the length of time that I did.	76	5
enjoy, appreciated	I enjoyed my previous part-time workplace. I felt appreciated there, and although I wasn't as free to engage in prayer with my clients, I highly valued the Christian-based care provided to clients and coworkers alike.	27	5
enjoy, stressful	Even it's stressful, pressure sometimes, deadline every day, workload, but I can do the work I enjoy doing. As a graphic designer, it is competitive, there are many more talented, skillful people out there. And it has a short working expectancy, so I worry about unemployment after thirty-five years of work.	61	2

<b>Coding</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Q#</b>
enjoy, utilized, appreciated	I enjoyed it, felt like I made a positive contribution, and my skills were well utilized and appreciated.	27	6
excited	I am excited with the challenges I am facing and the prospect of career development.	101	2
excited	Exciting and dynamic opportunity to work with senior leaders.	100	5
excited	Very exciting and dynamic opportunity to work with senior leaders.	106	5
excited, motivated	It is exciting, motivating.	81	2
excited, passionate, eager	Excited, passionate, eager.	3	2
fulfilled	Finding fulfillment, also very supported by my supervisor.	32	2
fulfilled	Fulfilled.		
fulfilled	Using my skill sets and fulfilling my life's calling.	56	3
fulfilled	Positively and very fulfilling especially working face-to-face with the public and knowing that you have helped them.	103	5
grateful	Grateful.	15	2
grateful	Very grateful. I'm an independent consultant with various contracts, currently one big one. I feel I get to make a big impact at a small company and my work matters.	25	2
grateful	Very grateful; have some like-minded coworkers; not always easy, but that is why I am called here.	74	2
grateful	Grateful.	15	3
grateful	Grateful. The current role isn't perfect, but I feel like I'm serving at a company that really needs my contribution.	25	3
grateful	Thankful—being a subject matter expert allows me to connect with more people outside of my direct line of sight.	74	3
grateful	I am happy with my current position by completing on time all my deliverables.	85	3
gratitude	Thankful—being a subject matter expert allows me to connect with more people outside of my direct line of sight.	74	6
growing	I am using my ability. I am growing in my position. I am going beyond my comfort zone.	65	3
happy	I enjoy helping others, and my current position is allowing me to help many people achieving their goals, which makes me happy.	75	3
happy	I am happy working together with my colleague to finish our daily target production.	85	5
happy	I am happy with my previous position being the Lead Hand and coordinating our daily activities to finish our daily target production.	85	6
learning	Good learning opportunity.	100	3
learning	Was in a position with lots of opportunity for learning.	17	5
learning	I work for myself; if I have a bad attitude then it's mostly about me.	77	2

<b>Coding</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Q#</b>
learning	I work for myself, so the buck stops here; if there's a problem then it is with me.	77	3
love	Love it.	57	2
love	I love my work environment as it provides me the flexibility needed for my work-life balance.	75	2
love	Although my job title has remained constant, my role has changed from grunt worker to special projects leader. I love my job!	79	3
love	I love my job. There are aspects of it that I don't like, but for the most part, I do like my team, and I enjoy going to work.	52	2
love	Love the job as I was given opportunities to try new things frequently.	60	6
motivated	Was motivated in that environment as well.	81	5
passionate	Very passionate to do the work required in my current position; my skills and strengths are being put to good use.	3	3
purpose	Helped me understand my God-given purpose.	106	6
respected	Coworkers are helpful and friendly. Not too much micromanagement. I feel like my view is respected.	79	2
satisfied	Satisfied.	56	2
satisfied, challenged, utilized	Both of my positions are utilizing my skills but in different ways. Between the two, I find a high level of satisfaction that I am challenged and utilized to both my benefit and theirs.	27	3
satisfied, utilized	Satisfied my skills were being utilized but looking for more opportunities.	84	6
supported	We are supporting each other to have a balanced workload.	85	2
supported	Very fair and understanding.	87	2
supported	Positive and supportive management.	13	2
supported	Very positive; the people I worked with were wonderful.	74	5
underpaid	I was encouraged to bring my own solutions. I was paid lower than my worth.	10	6
utilized	My current position fully uses all my skills and abilities honed during my years in the workforce.	45	3
utilized	Well aligned with my skills, strengths, and passions.	62	3
utilized	I feel very suited for this position.	76	3
utilized	I am having the opportunity to apply the experience I have from previous works, as well, from my scholar formation.	101	3
utilized	Had recently completed an M Sc and was applying what was learned.	17	6
utilized	I was able to use my computer skills and improve our system.	103	6

**Table 14. Comments—Upper Right Quadrant—Somewhat Meaningful Work.**

<b>Coding</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Q#</b>
angst	While I feel the company does a good overall job in managing staff, I feel a tepid acceptance of what embracing new methodology means.	48	2
angst	Moderately happy.	12	3
angst	I am in a unique environment in that I'm in a department of one which does not lend to any collaboration.	42	3
angst	Mixed.	15	5
appreciated	I feel valued and affirmed in my current role.	73	2
bored	I am a little bit timid about asking for more responsibility so soon after starting my employment. I have excelled greatly to the point where I have some extra time on my hands. I am not sure how to navigate this situation.	37	2
boss	Great coworkers, great experience that built the foundation of my career. Very poor executives and board members resulted in bankruptcy. Very good for me still though as I got the experience and lessons learned I can take to my next roles.	11	5
boss	My previous position was good until I got a micromanager that was very difficult to work with.	36	5
bright	Same position as now; all of our energies were focused on a common goal to sell, so things looked bright and positive.	94	6
challenged, stressful	Dynamic work environment with frequent new challenges; will not get bored but stressful at times.	60	2
challenging	The changes brought about by COVID-19 restrictions sometimes make it a bit challenging.	23	2
challenging	I had a good leader who helped me through the challenges of this position.	105	6
challenging	It can be challenging to work alongside colleagues that are openly hostile toward Christ.	78	2
challenging	Our efforts and goal were to sell the company; it almost occurred, but the deal fell through due to the economic downturn in 2014.	94	5
challenging	I feel positive; however, the environment is hard. I have a job and others don't, I am working from home, but it impacts those who depend on me going to the office. Also, there is a lot of uncertainty around, the future is hard to see, and I am concerned about my family here, my kids, and my family from outside of Canada as they are struggling (Venezuela).	80	2
constrained	Constrained.	15	6
constrained	I felt capped.	22	6
constrained	Constrained.	56	6
constrained	There was more opportunity, but again the ability to continue growing and getting new challenges and working with more people to create more influence had a ceiling. It seemed that this was no longer where I should be.	86	6



<b>Coding</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Q#</b>
engaged, challenged	Very engaging line of work and keeps me challenged.	13	3
enjoy	I enjoy going into work and working with the team I am with. I know that my work will make an impact.	5	2
enjoy	I really liked it.	47	5
enjoy	It was fresh and new and interesting.	96	5
enjoy	I enjoyed interacting with the public and my coworkers.	101	5
enjoy	It felt like a place I wanted to stay at.	47	6
enjoy	I enjoy my work; there are one or two bad apples in our group that are difficult to work with, but my work is something I like doing.	33	2
enjoy	I know God is using me in many ways . . . some of which he gives me the privilege of seeing . . . I see seasons in my career and right now it is summer.	30	3
enjoy, learn	I was given the opportunity to learn a lot and try new things, so I really enjoyed it.	66	6
excited, comfortable	Safe and comfortable, excited to be working in my current work environment.	84	2
faith	A choice is to first trust people and be cautious . . . regardless of how things are perceived, I know God is at work even if it results in me suffering or being successful. God defines my eternal good for His ultimate glory . . . trusting in Him is the best feeling.	30	2
family	Work together like a family.	98	5
flexible	Flexible; good variety; nimble; open-door policy for all personnel.	90	5
frustrated	Frustrated.	56	5
frustrated	I have skills and I put them to work, but I have a condition that impairs my hearing, and sometimes it also impacts my effectiveness and makes me frustrated because I know I am smart, knowledgeable, with good character, and I like my job.	80	3
frustrated	Slow moving to embrace new methodologies for getting work done.	48	5
frustrated	Same as above, as they are slow to move to new methodologies, unable to fully utilize my skill sets.	48	6
healthy	Collaborative healthy community.	100	2
job change	Unsure how long I should stay in the role. I see good things happening in the role but also some things that are prompting me to explore other options.	12	2
job change	I started looking for a change.	36	6
learn	I learned much about what I did well, and where I needed to improve.	96	6
learning	Great coworkers, good project that will look good on my resume, and great learning opportunity.	11	2
learning	I still have a lot to learn, but my team is helping me learn and my employer is giving me the necessary tools/resources to help me learn.	52	3
learning	Lots of growth opportunities were provided to me.	105	5

<b>Coding</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Q#</b>
learning	I was putting my experience to work while learning new skills, and it had a lot of challenges, like my hearing condition, lots of travels, but it allowed me to grow and learn.	80	6
learning, challenging	That one was a learning for me, a lot of challenges, but allowed me to be where I am.	80	5
learning, not passionate	New grad role so I was pushed to grow constantly and was always given more responsibility. No alignment with passions but I'm also figuring out what my passions are.	11	6
learning, overloaded	Good learning opportunity, overloaded.	100	3
love	I love my job. There are aspects of it that I don't like, but for the most part, I do like my team and I enjoy going to work.	52	2
mundane	Great job, felt a bit mundane at times, without purpose.	16	5
negative	Difficult to manage and interact with individuals with bad attitudes and not efficient to complete assigned activities.	53	2
not passionate	My work environment was enjoyable due to those that I worked with, but it was not an environment I was passionate to work in.	3	5
not passionate	My skills and strengths were being put to use, although I feel like I could be challenged more. I was not very passionate about my previous position.	3	6
not passionate	I'm employed in the general field that I was trained in, but it's not the area I'm most passionate about.	8	3
overloaded	I could be very effective with all my skills and strengths, but I am overloaded with work as am doing two different roles. One Admin moved, so I am left with two different roles.	103	3
political	Typical corporate politics from Board interferes unnecessarily with Operations. I have no influence over such things, but the circumstances greatly influence the ability to get the work done.	90	2
politics	Everything was good, except the management was quite disorganized. But I don't have to worry about that much in my position as a laborer.	1	5
politics	Good, but some office politics can be a challenge.	16	2
satisfied	Satisfying.	1	2
satisfied, underutilized	Mostly satisfied but disappointed that I'm not being used to my full potential.	84	3
supported	Positive and supportive management.	13	2
supported	As a member of the C-Suite team, I was able to drive my area of responsibility without interference.	90	6
thankful	It is a very flexible environment, and I am very thankful for the freedom.	42	2
tough	At that time, I was succeeding, using leadership skills, and growing in character. It was tough in many ways, but it felt more like I was supposed to be there.	86	5
underutilized	I did not get the opportunity to apply my skills and knowledge.	101	6

<b>Coding</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Q#</b>
underutilized	It didn't use my diploma, but I was learning lots and it was giving me experience related to what I studied at SAIT.	1	6
underutilized	Unable to fully utilize my skills in my field.	48	3
underutilized	Underutilized.	35	6
ups and downs	It has its ups and downs. But if it was good all the time, they wouldn't pay you for it.	8	2
utilized	I'm helping improve the processes and organize records/files. I am positive that I will be able to come up with better processes.	103	2
utilized	I'm window washing, but I studied for mechanical engineering technology. My current position uses my skills, and I enjoy it, but it isn't what I studied for.	1	3
utilized	Overall, I feel like my strengths are put to good use, but there are also personal skills that may not be used in my job.	5	3
utilized	My current role gives me scope for my skills, strengths, passions, and experience, but I am still exploring how best to apply those in the role. I'm grateful that my community is flexible enough to give me time to explore this.	73	3
utilized	I have positive feelings about my previous position as I was able to engage in generative activities outside of my primary responsibilities.	72	6
utilized	I have been able to use my skills and abilities in my current position.	23	3
utilized	I believe that God put me here to help the organization adjust to the changing workplace during this pandemic. The previous girl did not seem to be very open to change, so with all the recent changes, I am sure that my skills and attitude have been a positive for them as they navigate this pandemic.	37	3
utilized	All good. Able to influence and execute.	90	3
utilized	I am able to work hard and see some impact from that effort. Leadership is decent.	105	3
valued	I felt that I was a valued part of the team, and my experience helped to develop others with their skills.	49	3

**Table 15. Comments—Upper Left Quadrant—Underemployed.**

<b>Coding</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Q#</b>
difficult, insecure	It was a difficult time working there with the dread of layoffs always in the air.	42	5
enjoyable	It's enjoyable.	31	2
enjoyable	It was enjoyable. I had a great boss.	31	5
indifferent	I feel tired by the sameness.	96	2
indifferent	I pack boxes all day, so it's nice for the part of me that enjoys making things look nice, but I have many other talents.	9	3
indifferent	Ambivalent.	83	3

<b>Coding</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Q#</b>
indifferent	I have the skills to carry out this position well, but it has nothing to do with my passions or other strengths/skills that I have.	31	3
indifferent	I had the skills to carry out this position well, but it had nothing to do with my passions or other strengths/skills that I have.	31	6
insecure	It was good, but because it was a contract position for a fixed time with no chance of renewal, it was limited.	42	6
insecure	Training was inadequate, so I felt insecure in my role.	79	6
learning	It was a good place to learn and develop skills.	79	5
unfair	I work as a casual employee and the distribution of hours for casual were not equative.	18	5
unfulfilling	The people are nice, but it's unfulfilling.	9	2
unmotivated	It is hard to find motivation and excitement, or that I would have something new to offer.	96	3

**Table 16. Comments—Lower Right Quadrant—Draining.**

<b>Coding</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Q#</b>
accomplishment, challenged	Subject Matter Expert. Proud. Challenged. Felt a sense of accomplishment.	50	6
angst	It was a position I was not always comfortable with, so it sometimes created some internal angst.	23	5
angst	Discriminated, overlooked, forced towards doing something.	50	5
angst	Definitely, my skills are barely being used. I have more enjoyment accomplishing things on the women's leadership team at church than plugging away at my job. There's little room for advancement, and that's not bringing life to me.	86	3
angst, challenging, boss	Again, the last one and a half years were challenging, and I learned a lot. But my boss was difficult to work with, so it made me not enjoy the work.	52	6
boss	Work environment = people you work with. Too much micromanagement and not working as a team.	79	2
dead end	It was kind of a dead-end career-wise; also didn't like the office location, in an industrial section with nowhere to go for breaks.	33	5
disrespectful	It was all about money, with little or no regard for the employee.	87	5
enjoy, boss	I enjoyed the people I did work for but not my employer.	87	6
excel, learn	I enjoyed my previous position very much. I was able to excel in all my strengths, and I was provided with opportunities to build on my weaknesses.	37	6
hostile, negative, boss	It was a very positive environment for the first seven years I was there. The last two years have been very negative due to changes in senior management. As a result, the work environment became very hostile and not at all enjoyable.	37	5
insecure, boss	I know it's temporary. I don't have a lot of respect for senior management.	10	2

job change	Camp environment: the workplace is great but getting in a bit of a rut.	17	2
job change	It is time for a new opportunity, but not as many opportunities as there used to be in this economic environment.	17	3
job change	It's a conservative environment and I work with good people, but I think I'm in my wrong assignment. I don't think I belong here, and I've been here too long.	86	2
learning	I learned a lot about an industry I was unfamiliar with going into the job.	45	6
love, toxic, boss	Loved my job and my colleagues but toxic boss.	28	6
negative	General workplace negativity made me feel negative.	13	5
negative	It was a tough job mentally for myself, so I felt negative.	13	6
negative	Started very positive but ended quite negative.	32	5
negative, boss	Negative, with an oppressive environment/boss.	54	6
restrictive, demoralizing, political	Being in a union environment was restrictive, demoralizing, and political. People either lacked ambition or were overly ambitious to the point of being damaging to others.	78	5
stagnant, boss	My previous boss in my old workplace was difficult to work with. I got transitioned into his team for the past one and a half years I was with the company. Before that, I was in a good team, but I felt like I was stagnant and did not learn much.	52	5
stressful, underresourced	Highly stressful and substantially under resourced.	62	5
toxic	It was a somewhat toxic environment that I tried to bring some positivity into.	45	5
toxic, targeted, demoralizing, boss	Toxic, lack of leadership, double standard, lack of trust, lack of communication, targeted, and demoralizing.	28	2
underresourced	Disappointed that the needed resources didn't come through until I was almost done (done in!).	62	6
underutilized	I was removed from frontline work and underutilized.	78	6
	There were days when I thought I was very effective.	23	6

**Table 17. Comments—Lower Left Quadrant—Destructive/Corrosive.**

<b>Coding</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Q#</b>
boss	I was reporting to a junior leader who was learning from me more than providing leadership.	26	5
boss	Leaders have a lot of decision-making power about things that affect the personal life of employees such as requests for training, vacation requests, requests for bereavement leave, self-funded leave, and hours of work. They can say no without explanation to anything an employee asks, and there is no appeals process at all. This is a disturbing position to be in as an employee because if there is a clash of values (I need to visit my elderly mother and the	88	2

Coding	Comment	#	Q#
	boss doesn't see that as a priority for vacation time to be granted), then I have no options.		
boss	My work is interfered with by my direct supervisor because she doesn't understand the work, doesn't have training in the work that I do, and doesn't trust my decisions because she doesn't know whether they are good decisions nor not. Lots of defending decisions need to be made in my role.	88	3
bullying	As part of the bullying process, the supervisor identified what you were good at the job and aspects of the job that you enjoyed and made sure you were not allowed to work on those things. She also made sure that each person only had a small part of a project so that no one could feel like they were adding value—and just felt like a cog in a wheel. It was an intentional approach to make people feel bad about themselves and powerless. If anyone dared to ask higher-ups to address it, they were treated like they were the problem.	88	6
bullying	My previous employers were abusive of workers. Not a positive place. It took the grace of God for me to stay there.	41	5
bullying	The direct supervisor was a bully and humiliated staff. It created a fear environment. She often had a specific target (for a long time it was me), and the other staff were afraid to speak up in case they became the new target. Lots of people were sick, and the morale was very low. Even though I tried to get help through HR and other leaders, there was “nothing that could be done”. It seemed that I was making it up. That environment continues to be poisonous, but I was fortunate to get another position, but the bullying continues and it is well known that it is NOT a place anyone wants to go to work.	88	5
disrespectful, unappreciated	Very disrespectful people, and I felt that I was not appreciated.	67	5
government	Due to government and ideological views, our entire industry is constantly under attack.	94	2
ineffective	Not very effective. Not making much of a difference.	14	2
insecure	Temp work was horrible because I had to keep bouncing from job to job. Very stressful for someone who doesn't like meeting new people.	9	5
negative	I was surrounded by people who didn't care for the job, and that affected their attitude and others.	5	5
negative	It started off great, but then the workplace atmosphere began to shift, making me feel more negatively near the end of my time there.	8	5
negative	The only reason I didn't say, “Not at all effectively,” is because it used my ability to adapt well.	9	6

<b>Coding</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Q#</b>
negative	This job was only temporary, so I knew that things would be better in the future, but I still put my full effort into my work as it is a reflection of me.	5	6
toxic	I learned a lot at the big company, and working there gave me credibility to do what I do today. I'm grateful today for what I learned there ten-plus years ago, but it was soul-stomping at the time.	25	6
toxic	It was a toxic place to work so I left.	77	5
toxic	It was such a toxic place that it was hard to navigate my position and what was required.	77	6
toxic	It was toxic.	4	5
toxic	Toxic, double standard, lack of trust, favoritism, lack of communication, increased workload without an increase in pay, strengths of staff are not maximized.	28	2
toxic	Toxic, targeted, criticized, not valued.	28	3
unappreciated	Working at a big company, I felt like I was a small cog in a big wheel and felt like my work didn't matter.	25	5
unappreciated	I had to find a new role where I could provide more value to the organization.	26	6
unappreciated	I worked as hard as I can within tight deadlines.	67	6
uncertain	My position predominately deals with human interaction, travel, and business development, something that COVID is curtailing for the foreseeable future.	94	3
uncertain	Uncertain.	47	2
unsuited	It was a customer service job, and I'm not very well suited for that kind of work.	8	6

**Table 18. Comments from Job Changers.**

<b>Bottom Left -&gt; Bottom Left</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Q#</b>
I was actually afraid when I moved. I was afraid that I really was worthless, that my abilities were not good enough to succeed. I spent energy trying to “stay under the radar” in order to do my work and not be noticed in any way.	88	7
<b>Bottom Left -&gt; Top Left</b>		
I gotta do it, but I’d rather do something more meaningful with my life.	9	7
<b>Bottom Left -&gt; Top Right</b>		
It has been way better. I work better in an actual team environment, where everyone is positive and works hard.	4	7
My current position is what I went to for school, and I feel like I put more effort and act more serious than my previous position.	5	7
Better opportunities and better management who wanted to invest in me.	7	7
I felt more challenged in my current position.	8	7
Oh, it has been a journey! Initially, I felt freedom from the old big company and that I was “detoxifying” from the big corporate culture. It took me a few years to appreciate the positive things I learned there and not view it all as negative. I’m very grateful for what I get to do today and know that the previous position (at the big co) prepared me for what I do today (self-employed but doing contract work at a very small company).	25	7
Hopeful, engaged, optimistic.	26	7
I think my current position is a much better fit for me personally, and the leadership and management is MUCH better than at my previous employment.	39	7
Encouraging.	40	7
I am always thankful to God for my current job.	41	7
I work more wholeheartedly as I work for God.	61	7
I love working for myself.	77	7
<b>Bottom Right -&gt; Top Right</b>		
Relief, valued initially, less pay, proud of myself for obtaining a new job at my age, slightly less toxic.	28	7
<b>Bottom Right -&gt; Top Left</b>		
Life was viewed differently, pursuit of work-life balance was the priority, more time to grow in faith, happy, excited, challenged, friendship, motivated.	50	7
<b>Bottom Right -&gt; Top Right</b>		
More engaged at my job and not constantly looking for the next job offer.	13	7
I felt a sense of challenge (in a positive way) because my skills and abilities were finally being used.	23	7
Very happy that there seems to be a good fit for me in the same organization.	32	7
Was really awesome for a few years, but some changes made in management and ended up with some micromanagers, and now it's less enjoyable.	33	7



I am currently struggling in my new position. In my previous position, I was involved in all facets of the organization. In my new position, I feel limited in my involvement, so it has been an adjustment. It was enjoyable for the first couple of months as I was learning the processes and the organization itself, as well as assisting with the transition to working remotely. Now that I have adjusted, I feel lost as to what to do next. I am not sure of how to grow in this organization.	37	7
It was like a breath of fresh air.	45	7
Great. I enjoy my team and my work now.	52	7
Positive. Felt like a fresh start! Supportive boss and collegial team.	54	7
Relieved to have the needed resources to do good work; in a position to mentor junior colleagues, which is satisfying.	62	7
It was a relief to finally be able to use my skills and be empowered to make decisions to benefit others.	78	7
I was happy to leave the previous employer and have a fresh date.	87	7

#### **Top Left -> Top Left**

N/A. I did not transition from one directly to the other.	31	7
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#### **Top Left -> Top Right**

Hope in building a career.	18	7
It was a relief leaving a contracting environment and going to a full-time position.	42	7
Moving away from the oil and gas environment in Calgary has greatly reduced anxiety about job security.		
Went from employee to buying the company, so it was an exciting and scary time.	69	7
Changed from "have to go to work" to "get to go to work."	79	7
It was the right decision. I may not love my current position, but I am content and happy every day. There is no negativity, and I feel valued.	99	7

#### **Top Right -> Top Right**

It was awesome. The transition took one day. Done one job and on to the next.	1	1
I was initially somewhat nervous and worried due to the incredibly large difference between the two positions. In my previous position, I was in my comfort zone and was not challenged too much. My real passions and true strengths and skills were also not put to use. Since my transition, I am much more passionate to work and to succeed. I feel that my abilities are being put to good use and has allowed me to gain a greater appreciation for the work that I am doing.	3	7
About the same (I stayed with the same employer and moved up in position due to my experience).	6	7
No change.	11	7
Peaceful but also unsettled.	12	7
Better utilized.	15	7
It was led by God.	16	7
Constant and lingering suggestion of impending layoffs reduced my motivation, desire, and work performance.	19	7
Unsure.	21	7

Excited and scared.	22	7
Positive.	24	7
I like the variety of two workplaces, and the differing skills required for each keep me grounded I think.	27	7
Positive.	29	7
God's provision and directing my path ... my preference is job security ... His preference is God security in relationship with Him	30	7
Grateful, compensated well. Working as part of a cooperative team.	35	7
My team was good, work was good, but my supervisor was a very difficult person to deal with.	36	7
Not a job!	38	7
I moved from a job I was very skilled at and I had to develop my skill set over a few years to perform at the level I was accustomed to performing at in the new job. At times, it was a bit frustrating because the company was paying me a lot of money because of my number of years in the industry, but at the same time, the folks that were brand-new to the industry were performing at the same level as me in the new job.	46	7
I like the people aspect of my work, feel that TC is ahead in some areas and behind in others.	48	7
Very positive. I am a Contractor, so I am able to accept contacts from several companies. Positive attitude is a must as transition is part of the role.	49	7
It was better to enjoy my family.	53	7
Very positive with a lot of potential and possibilities.	55	7
Released.	56	7
Great, I loved both jobs.	57	7
Excited and yet some fear of "Will I be successful with this new team?"	58	7
A bit of anxiety. Took a less desirable position at a better company so not unexpected.	59	7
Not much changed. The work is still fairly dynamic and lots of new things to learn. Work attitude is always to try my best to do a good job and be accountable for my own work.	60	7
Feeling a bit uncomfortable and stressful at first while going through the learning curve.	64	7
My feelings were grateful for my previous position, even though my skills were not fully utilized, because I learned something new. My current position I am grateful for because it uses my abilities and causes me to go beyond my comfort zone.	65	7
I felt good about the decision to make a change and to continue to build on my skills and values.	68	7
Afraid at first, unsure of expectations.	70	7
I was led by God to my new position. I was being obedient and knew it would be fruitful.	71	7
I feel positive about my current position after transitioning from my previous role.	72	7
I was able to transition well from my previous role and to move easily into my current role.	73	7
About the same. :)	74	7

I enjoy my current position more than my previous role with the same employer, and I have no regret with my decision to move to my current role :)	75	7
I felt a sense of relief from a number of pressures.	76	7
That transition was a good thing for me because it let me learn, and now I am a better professional because of that.	80	7
The tasks involved in the work became less important as did the organization. It was more about personal fulfillment than ambition to succeed in the organization.	81	7
Overall, very positive but underutilized.	82	7
Hopeful and optimistic that things would work out.	84	7
I am very happy and thankful to God for my current position working in the office with a higher salary and good retirement benefits.	85	7
Although change can be difficult, and the two positions are very different in a number of aspects, the transition allowed for greater growth and direction in relation to skill, passion, and ultimately calling.	89	7
Completely different role, so learning to be content. And slow to speak.	90	7
Divinely appointed!	95	7
Was unsure I made the right choice. But have learned to enjoy the new role and am learning and growing in it.	100	7
I have always gone to work with a positive attitude and did my best to perform my activities. I continue to have the same attitude toward work, and now I am stimulated to growth in my career.	101	7
Very good.	102	7
The transition was a lot different; my current job is very stressful considering the workload I have.	103	7
I preferred the old position but am happy to still be employed so am not complaining.	104	7
Fairly intense, moving from a medium-sized company to a large-sized company.	105	7
The change was a major switch. I appreciate both jobs for the riverside growth opportunities. I know God is using them for a greater purpose.	106	7

### **Top Right -> Top Left**

My previous job was one I enjoyed which was not related to my field of study but was a positive work environment and allowed me to be creative and learn on the job. My current job is one I took out of necessity after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.	2	7
It was good. Both were jobs that I valued and allowed me to grow.	66	7
I like my new role better than previous.	83	7
Both were similar jobs. The current position was also fresh and new and interesting in the beginning. It becomes challenging to find new aspects of it to interest me and keep me motivated with each year.	96	7

### **Top Right -> Bottom Right**

Experienced some grief, my relief of higher pay.	10	7
I'm in a bit of a rut, feeling like I might be just finishing out my career. Current role is more of a job than a career.	17	7

It was good at first, I knew learning project management and leading individual projects that way was a step up, though much, much harder. But, really, I'm realizing now that some of this was hard training, and my passions, skills, and strengths should be under a different assignment. I'm spending tons of time with God right now to discover where I really should be, and I'm hearing and realizing that I'm in the wrong industry. There's conviction and hope, and I'm ready to do whatever God wants for my life. I want to work with him on His assignment and I feel He is inviting me to something new.	86	7
Exciting to be in a new position.	98	7

**Top Right -> Bottom Left**

Happy to have a better work-life balance.	14	7
Shocked.	47	7
It was very good in the beginning of the transition until the department was restructured.	92	7
More of a struggle and diminishing opportunities didn't make for a positive attitude.	94	7

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## VITA

James (Edward) Bruyn, CPA, PMP was born in Cambridge (Hespeler) Ontario on August 16, 1964. He holds a Joint Honors Bachelor of Math in Computer Science and Accounting from the University of Waterloo. He received a Master of Arts in Theology from Prairie Graduate School in 2001. He studied in the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary from 2018-2021 in the Workplace Theology, Ethics and Leadership track. He is expected to graduate from the program in May of 2021. James and his wife, Susan, have been married for twenty-seven years and have three children: Jon-Jacob, Timothy, and Juliana. They are his pride and joy. He is the author of *God With Us At Work*, *Gifted to Do Our Work*, and *31 Days With God at Work*. He works as a Principal Engineer on Train Control Systems. He currently serves as the director of Faith At Work Network Canada.